

Manzanillo

June 2015

SUN

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

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*Comments, brickbats and bouquets
on our featured articles are always
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Submissions for possible inclusion
in the magazine, please send to the
editor by 20th of each month.

We are always looking for writers
or ideas on what you would like us
to write about in the magazine.

Preferred subjects are concerning
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All articles should be 1000 words
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June

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A little about June

By Kirby Vickery

I'll bet that when you sat down to read this you thought it would be another one of those essays where the author lists out a whole bunch of things about the month and then glorifies some of the numerous happenstances which have occurred in various places. According to some of my friends then I should be calling this an 'Ode.' But that's not really correct either because an 'Ode' is something communicated with a lyrical verse. I really hate poetry because I can't understand most of it even after it's explained to me. So, no lyrical things called lines and verse. So, no 'Ode.' But, I am going to talk about June a little.

First of all I know that June is the favorite month of all the school children almost everywhere except, perhaps, the graduating seniors whom will be leaving their coveted halls of education just when they have everything all figured out. Now they have one last fling before college or that all important job that will soon satisfy their need for wine, women or men, song and car but not necessarily in that order. Quite a shame that. You'd figure that the powers to be would let them come back in the fall one more time. Just for a few weeks and just to ram it down the throats of the new seniors.

I used to have a problem with June as I did with the rest of the months. I never could remember how many days are in each month with the exception of February. I know that when Augustus Caesar became Augustus Caesar he has been reported to have taken a day from February and added it to his month. In truth, August got two days from the realignment of the Julian year in 45 BC as did several other months because of the Roman realignment and February didn't although it became a convenient place for the placement of the Leap Year day. Augustus had nothing to do with it.

As I don't do poetry very well and needed an aid to determine the month lengths for general conversation and school tests. I discovered that if you take either hand and make a fist with it and point with the other sides first finger to the first knuckle bump; it represents the 31

days in January. Now point to the little valley between the first and second knuckle and that represents the 28/9 days in February. The second knuckle bump and all the other bumps are 31 days and the little valleys are 30. When you reach the little finger, just start over on the first knuckle again.

June, the first month of summer, is the month for lovers. As well as it should be. It's the first month in most of the countries we all come from that it gets warm enough to pull off a wedding ceremony outside without getting frost bite and yet early enough before the insects get up and chew their way through the wedding guests. A June wedding also means the happy couple can get away and enjoy a scenic holiday when the earth is being replenished with new life all during their honeymoon. Now that's supposed to be suggestive but this is a family paper. Just think of the beautiful memories of where you went and what you saw during your honeymoon. Others can remember the nights more than the days. Ah, such is June.

Mexico has two official holidays in June. Well almost anyway. The first one is on the 1st and it is Dia de la Marina or Marine's day. The second one falls on the third Sunday and is called Dia del Padre or Father's day. This holiday is shared by the United States which also celebrates Flag Day on the 14th. I still think it's just a little odd that the U.S. adopted the flag in 1777 but didn't come up with the Constitution until seven years later. I may get in trouble on this but I couldn't find where Canada has any national holidays during the month of June. I did find where Newfoundland and Labrador celebrate Discovery Day. The Northwest Territories have a "statutory" National Aboriginal Day on the 21st. The National Holiday of Quebec is celebrated in Quebec on the 24th along with St. John the Baptist Day.

It looks to me that Canada had set up a celebration for a 'Canada Day' to be celebrated in June in 1868. Initially to be called Dominion Day. This was in reference to the British North America Act which designated Canada as a

country. This article in Wikipedia tells that most Canadian citizens thought themselves to be primarily British so it wasn't celebrated until 1917. Then it was only that year. A bill to get it renamed the National Holiday of Canada was killed in 1946. It finally got another start for being celebrated in 1958 with a stutter start for popularity and name changes through 1980. The only problem with that is that they moved it to October and later it was settled in July so I can't write about it anymore in this segment. I think I need to know what the difference between a "Statute" holiday and a regular one is.

Father's day is celebrated from the 23rd of February thru November 10th throughout 122 countries including Canada (although not officially). The big day for dad seems to settle on the third Sunday of June in a vast majority of countries and even though several cultures have joined Father's Day with other events which are political, religious and historical based. It still remains the day of the year that fathers are honored for being fathers just as mothers are honored in the same way normally ahead of the fathers. I wonder why that is.

At something less than 1,015 bytes of information, to everyone I say "Good Meitheamh" to you all with many returns. (you can look I up if you don't know)

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Tommy Clarkson

Aloe Concinna Baker

Family: *Asphodelaceae*

Also known as: (This is a debatable subject!)

Let's start with some Aloe basics. It is a **genus** of succulent plants originating in the Arabian Peninsula, southern Africa, south western Asia, Madagascar and the Mascarene Islands. The 450 lily-related members were once considered taxonomically grouped with the *Liliaceae* family.

Aloe comes in a diversity of forms and sizes ranging from small grass-like herbs and stemless succulent rosettes, barely a few inches tall, to large species supported by stout, sixty feet (18.2 meters) trunks. With a waxy surface on their succulent leaves, they are well-adapted for harsh climates with scant precipitation. Their simple or branched inflorescence of yellow, orange or red tubular flowers generally angle downwards.

Cultivated for thousands of years, Aloe has been captured in prehistoric rock art by bushmen. The Egyptian Ebers Papyrus - from around 1552 BC - referred to its medicinal value and use in embalming. The Greek herbal of Dioscorides (41-68 AD) recommends that Aloe be applied "*externally for wounds, hemorrhoids, ulcers and hair loss, and internally as a laxative*".

(For a good general Aloe page visit: <http://succulent-plant.com/families/aloaceae.html>)



Numerous folks identify this plant as Jemen Aloe or Squarrosa Aloe

Now, I guess I'll go out on a limb (or should I say a succulent branch) and say that this is an *Aloe concinna* Baker. But that's my best guess estimate!

(Heretofore, I thought total confusion was what we experienced every time we try to drive our car into Guadalajara! However, I have found that befuddlement pales beside the muddle of misinformation that surrounds identifying this attractive succulent!)

There is simply no consensus as to this plant's identification by a majority of botanists - be they real and cyber space self-anointed. From my numerous readings, no little internet research and various other eclectic sources, I've unearthed that numerous folks identify it as Jemen Aloe. (Though of those on the internet, no few - I suspect - simply mouth the mistakes of others because of what appear to be plagiarizingly verbatim phrases used without attribution.)

Additional folks say it's Squarrosa Aloe. But, while this attractive plant might be closely related to what we've pictured here, from I've been able to discern, Squarrosa Aloe is a more creeping species that grows hanging down limestone cliffs in Socotra.

However, confusingly, yet others state it is a Tiger Aloe (*Aloe punctata*). While others – with an equal amount of conviction - assert that that it is an *Aloe juvenna*. But as to its being confused with *Aloe juvenna*, the one on which we are focusing here seems to have larger rosettes. These, in turn, have longer, sometimes recurved white-spotted lanceolate leaves edged with triangular teeth. Atop this there can be a cluster of tubular orangish-red flowers with greenish tips. I've read that in the wild its population is increasingly limited as it is becoming threatened by livestock grazing in its native Zanzibar realm.

Partiality for full sun is the preference of most kinds of Aloe species, with the larger Aloes enjoying more direct sunlight. Many types of Aloe produce magnificent racemes of packed tubular yellow, orange or red flowers. And, for those without proper outside space, numerous small species can be grown – complete with their showy flowers – in a pot on a sunny window ledge.

As to pests and diseases effecting Aloe, these are the principals:

Aloe mite – This microscopic critter can cause severe damage to some species of Aloe. They spread via the wind or contact. Infestation will cause irregular, uncontrolled leaf and inflorescence growth and produce many finger-like projections. These growths depend on the mites to secrete a growth hormone-like substance. While this damage is not reversible it will not progress if the mites are removed with a miticide.

Aloe rust - A fungus, it causes round black or brown spots on the leaves. That dark color is caused by oxidation of phenolic substances in the sap. Once formed, these ugly spots are permanent but do not usually spread. It can be thwarted by application of a systemic fungicide. Prevention is the best option via good air circulation, sunlight, not allowing water to stay on the leaves and avoiding excessive watering when it's cool.

Aloe scales - There are two of these insects to watch for - small flat, oval white ones and larger ones of reddish-brown. Tending to live in colonies on the leaf surface, they both suck the sap from the plant and – insult to injury - may spread viruses and other diseases. However they are usually quite sensitive to systemic insecticides.



Others assert that that it is an *Aloe juvenna*



Yet others say it's a Tiger Aloe (*Aloe punctata*).

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Tommy Clarkson

Blood Leaf, (*Iresine herbstii*)

Family: *Amaranthaceae*

Also known as: Chicken Gizzard, Beefsteak, Beetroot Plant or Formosa Bloodleaf

Beefsteak would be tough enough to be known as if you were, in fact, an attractive, quiet sort of non-threatening plant, but Chicken Gizzard? Ya' simply gotta' love any plant brave enough to be called that! (Don't, by the way, be confused with the nearly ten feet (three meters) tall shrub *Acalypha wilkesiana* from Fiji, also called the Beefsteak Plant.)

Interestingly, while not uncommonly found in *viveros* and nurseries, it is not all that well written about or documented.

One of eighty in its genus, with most coming from South America or Australia, the Blood Leaf - like the Samba - originated in Brazil but, as a result of its colorful foliage, it is now widely cultivated around the world. (Interestingly, *Iresines* were introduced to England and France in the mid-1800s and grown in their conservatories and stove houses -heated greenhouses - as exotic treasures. They were most popularly grown during Victorian times and often used in colorful summer bedding arrangements.)

Suffice it to say that it has strikingly beautiful green/purplish-red leaves with contrasting reddish pink veins and petioles. I recently read one person describe it as having "Leaf color (that) varies from a dark purple to beet red with magenta veins." Perhaps, it's better that you look at one up close and personal as opposed to me trying to describe this unique color combination!



Nicely nestled among Lacy-leafed Philodendron, ours is quite happy beneath a Foxtail Palm

Growing up to 6 ½ feet (two meters) in height and three feet (one meter) wide, its long stalked leaves are notched at their ends, either ovate or sub-round and range anywhere from ¾" to four inches (two to ten centimeters) in length. Its small, greenish-white (non-ornamental) flowers - and hence seeds - are only infrequently found in cultivation.

The *Iresine herbstii* prefers moist, well-drained, organically rich soil in partially shady to sunny, high humidity locales. (But, remember, the more the sun the greater the color and, unless your soil is already high in organic material, for the best possible results, compost or aged manure is a very good thing!)

During the warmer seasons, ensure that the soil is kept evenly moist by regular, deep waterings - weekly, in the absence of rain. The best remembered rule of thumb is to "soak the roots then let them dry out". Beyond that, I'd encourage a two to three inch layer of organic mulch or coconut coir to keep moisture from evaporating as well as minimize need for weeding! With the cooler climates of fall and winter reduce the watering.

The Blood Leaf is best propagated through cuttings. If you'd like a bit bushier plant, pinch off about one inch of the growing tips and any flower spikes. As to fertilizer,

use a general all-purpose one (14-14-14 or 20-20-20) every month during the growing season. But don't overfeed as too many nutrients will place your plant at risk of Powdery Mildew.

Has the Blood Leaf insect enemies? Yep - aphids and spider mites. How does one get rid of these little suckers . . . figuratively and literally speaking? Well, those durned little aphids congregate on the undersides and at the joints of leaves, where they suck the sap from the plant. Their buddies in plant carnage, spider mites, also suck the life from the plant - but they are even smaller and more difficult to see with the naked eye. Their presence is obvious by a stippled appearance they leave on the foliage. Both of these uninvited and much unwanted guests can be removed by regular application of an insecticidal soap spray. If at all possible, try to avoid chemical pesticides which can kill beneficial insects such as ladybugs - who we like very much because they just love to chow down on those blasted aphids and spider mites!

There are some popular cultivars for which a gardener might be on the lookout including the *Brilliantissima*, which has bright red, heart shaped leaves with pink veins and a slightly upright growth; *Aureoreticulata* that has green leaves with yellow veins; *Iresine diffusa* 'Formosana' with its green and yellow leaves. (In full sun appearing almost totally yellow, while in shade they're green with yellow veining) and, *Iresine diffusa* 'Verschaffeltii' with its indented, kidney shaped leaves and a rambling nature.

Used much as a border or bedding plant or as a low hedge, ours is planted to juxtapose its unique leaves against Lacey Leafed Philodendron in the Foxtail Palm planter on our swimming pool terrace.

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It has "leaf color (that) varies from a dark purple to beet red with magenta veins.



The red liquid that flows from broken leaves and stems can, most certainly, stain!

The Guy with the Yellow Shoes

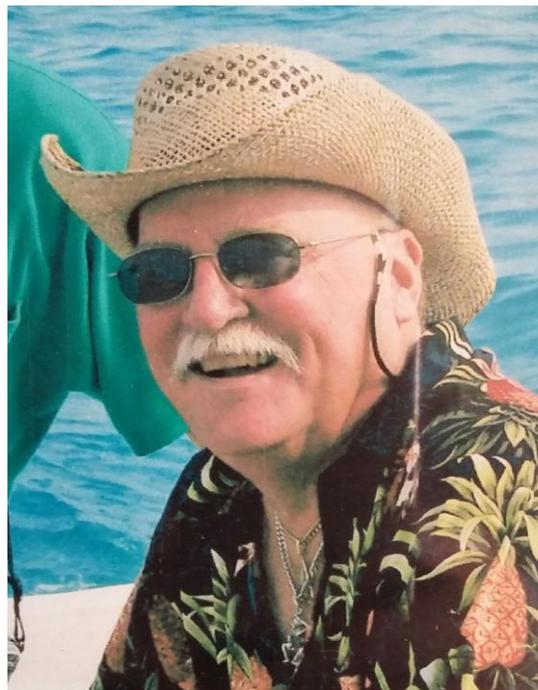
Craig Scott Mc Dole ("Cragie" to his close friends and "Goyo" to his Mexican buddies) passed away on Friday night April 17, 2015 at Echauri Hospital. This past year was a difficult one for him as a result of health reasons. But he never lost his humor, his laughter, his smile or his style. (Oh...did I mention those bright yellow shoes he loved to wear!)

Craig was born in Chicago, IL on July 10, 1947 and moved to Tampa, Florida with his family when he was seven years old. (His falling down the coal chute, one cold wintery morning at his grandmother's house, might have had something to do with that familial, southerly migration!)

He graduated from Brandon High School, and often told the story of his Spanish teacher going around the class giving Spanish names to each student..."*Mary you are Maria*", "*Robert you are Roberto*", and when he answered his name was "*Craig*"... she said "*Caramba! From now on your name is Diego*". Of course he passed the class because the teacher (as did we all) fast fell in love with his effervescent - Love for Life - personality.

He went on to study art and design at the Sarasota Ringling School of Art - famous for its art and design program - and continued his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago. Many were not familiar with the fact that he was an excellent artist and painter. Early on in this experience, as could have almost been predicted, he told his mother he wanted to become a clown... you know, with the Ringling Brothers Circus also in Sarasota. Suffice it to say, she put a quick stop to that!

After College he worked for some highly regarded design studios in Philadelphia and Washington DC, but Craig, "forever the free spirit", was always hopping to events with his friends around the country, from Los Angeles to New York to Washington DC. He simply loved to travel, be adventurous and was never afraid to travel alone. He explored Europe, South America and Northern Africa. (Somewhere along these travels, he made a stop in Amsterdam where he ended up with a full length rabbit coat. And then there was that incident when he fell asleep on a train in West Berlin and somehow, undetected, ended up in communist East Berlin, where their authorities were not particularly pleased!)



By the way, some of those earlier mentioned friends were race horse owners and I (Steven, Craig's Life Partner of more than 35 years) working at that time in the horse racing industry knew many of them - numerous of whom were friends of Craig's. In January 1980 I was invited to go to a New Year's Eve party in DC by a mutual friend. Not being the party type, I reluctantly agreed to meet at his Capitol Hill house, before going on to the party. But once I had arrived, they opened the door and there sat Craig, next to the fireplace.

With beautiful long blond hair parted in the middle, bronze toner on his face and "dressed to the nines" in a bright colored outfit, he was quite the sight to behold! We all went on to the party. But once there, the two of us stood in the kitchen and talked all night. From that night our lives were forever one, with us soon renting our first apartment together on Capitol Hill.

Our lives dramatically changed when in 1981 Craig was shot in the mouth by a robber at our front door necessitating many operations at Georgetown University Hospital. (Oh how he enjoyed telling people that at the same time he was in the hospital President Regan was on the floor above and James Brady on his floor.)

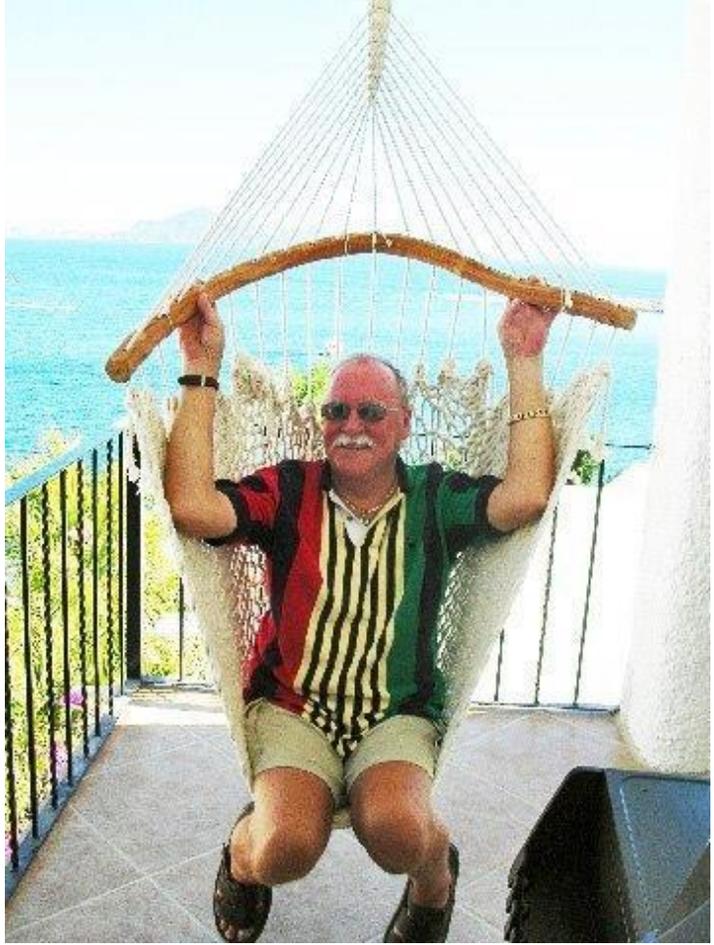
Shortly afterwards we moved and settled in Annapolis, Maryland buying our first house in October 1981 . . . the month we “closed” the mortgage rates hit an all-time high, never to have been surpassed! What fun experiences we shared and the surprises he provided – like the time when I returned from out of town work to have jaw drop in utter astonishment in seeing that he had demolished an entire exterior wall of the house in order to expand the living room. “Permit? We need a permit!” How he enjoyed fixing up, renovating and decorating houses. It became our *modus operandi* during our twenty some years living in and around Annapolis.

Craig worked in design for retail stores around the Washington Beltway and also owned and operated “The Gift Horse”, an upscale retail store on Maryland Avenue in Annapolis, between The State House and The Naval Academy. He sold The Gift Horse and decided to retire early OK, OK ...he simply wanted us to enjoy life more, hence it seemed logical to simply quit working!

Craig loved his dog “Kirk”, a big, beautiful Springer Spaniel mix. He was part of our family for 15 years but was a little hyper around other dogs - and a few folks who acted like dogs! This nervous excitement was particularly manifest when Craig would take him to the veterinary. So the vet always provided Craig with a “calm down” pill for him to give to Kirk before arriving at the vet’s office. He would faithfully so comply - giving Kirk one-half of the pill and then taking the other half himself. That’s God’s honest truth!

In those days, I was a real estate lawyer and exhausted with my work pace and told Craig I wanted to retire early (OK - like him - quit working!) Craig agreed, but on the condition that we retire outside the United States. Appropriately, in all of our travels especially in Central and South America we had been searching for such a place. Although we had visited Mexico before, we never really thought about retiring here. A friend of Craig’s suggested he look up Mazatlan, but Craig by mistake found Manzanillo and there the story takes a turn.

On the internet it looked like a place that we might like...except, where was the darned power plant that kept being mentioned in all the articles? So in 2005 we booked a flight for the sole purpose of buying a



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retirement property. Remember we had never visited Manzanillo, we had but only one week and it was one of those extremely hot and humid weeks in July.

Craig booked a room at Hotel La Posada, because Lisa, one of the hotel owners, shared his Tampa connection. He woke me our first morning in Manzanillo loudly telling me to come look out the window at all the Navy Guys on the beach - it seemed like a return to Annapolis!

As we were looking for property, the hotel owner recommended we contact Candy King and the rest is retirement history. By Friday of that week we had submitted an offer to buy a condo over-looking Manzanillo Bay. On Saturday in a taxi on our way to the airport we received a call from Candy that our offer had been accepted - it was like being on HGTV!

By 2010 we were living in our newly build house on Club de Yates, overlooking the Santiago Bay and Pacific Ocean. We pinched ourselves every morning in reminder that it was not a dream.

What Craig enjoyed most about Mexico were his Mexican buddies, whether entertaining them at home, having his favorite drink with them at the local bar, cheering with them on a *futbol* game or playing and dancing along with them to Banda music - his favorite Mexican music. He was "Goyo" to them, saying that he was more Mexican than they were! Indeed, Craig was generous and never judged anyone based on their status in life.

He enjoyed life and left the worrying to me. I wrote in his USA obituary that Craig was like Peter Pan...he never wanted to grow up and, hence, he never did! Accordingly, it seems most apt that he was always singing the lyrics to the song from Peter Pan. "I Don't Want To Grow Up, I Don't Want To Grow Up.....Not Me! Not I".

I know this story started about "Craig", then "Me", then "We".... but....the final story is the wonder and enjoyment of the "We".

(Oh...did I mention the Yellow Shoes!)

Steven McDorman





How Long Can Retirees Contribute to Their IRAs?

Yann Kostic

Now that tax time has passed, many Americans are looking toward the next tax year, and they have a lot of questions about individual retirement accounts (IRAs). One big question: "If I turn 70 1/2 in January 2016, can I still make deposits into my traditional IRA?" (As a reminder, a traditional IRA is a retirement savings vehicle to which you contribute pre-tax dollars. The money grows tax-deferred, and you withdraw it in retirement, paying taxes on it then.)

The answer is yes. Because you will not reach age 70 1/2 in 2015, you are eligible to make a contribution for the 2015 tax year (which is the year before the year in which you turn 70 1/2).

The maximum contribution is \$5,500, with one possible addition. Because you're older than 50, you qualify for the 2015 "catch-up" contribution of \$1,000, meaning in 2015 you can contribute up to \$6,500.

There are some caveats. For example, you may not contribute more than 100% of your earned income, which consists of wages or salary from work but not dividend interest from your investments. So, if your earned income for 2015 will be less than \$6,500, you may not contribute the full amount.

When it comes to withdrawing from an IRA, at age 59 1/2 anyone can begin taking distributions from his or her IRA without penalty. There are no penalties if you also take distributions up to the full balance of your account.

What is regulated are required minimum distributions (RMDs), which you must begin taking by April 1 of the year following the year in which you turn 70 1/2 (in this case, April 1, 2017). As listed by IRS Publication 590, your RMDs are determined by taking the total balance of all your IRAs as of December 31 of the prior year and dividing that number by your life expectancy.

Clearly, this is complicated, which is why it's helpful to have an advisor to guide you.

Yann Kostic is a Financial Advisor (RIA) and Money Manager with Atlantis Wealth Management, specializing in retirees (or soon to be), self-reliant women and Expats in Mexico. Due to a recent transition to an international custodian, firm clients are now allowed to hold multiple currencies in a single account, including US dollars, Canadian dollars, Euros and Mexican Pesos for instance. Yann splits his time between Florida and Lake Chapala/Manzanillo.

Comments, questions or to request his Newsletter "News You Can Use". Contact him at Yannk@AtlantisWealth.com, in Mexico: (376) 106-1613 or in the US: (321) 574-1529

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AT THE MOVIES

Suzanne A. Marshall

Woman in Gold

Starring: Helen Mirren, Ryan Reynolds, Daniel Bruhl

Director: Simon Curtis

“Maria Altmann, an octogenarian Jewish refugee, takes on the Austrian government to recover artwork she believes rightfully belongs to her family”

I never hesitate to see a movie that stars Helen Mirren. I wasn't disappointed by this one either. It's based on a true story wherein family artwork stolen from one of countless Jewish families by the Nazis, shows up on display in a world famous art museum in Vienna Austria.

The locations for the movie vacillate between California where Altmann currently lives and Vienna, the site of the artwork museum. The scenes of the streets and architecture of Vienna are stunning as the story unfolds between the present time and portrayals of past memories from Altmanns life in Vienna leading to the Nazi occupation.

With the assistance of a young Jewish lawyer, Altmann finds the courage to battle the daunting hurdles involved in seeing that justice is carried out in memory of her family. Her young lawyer also finds himself surprisingly imbedded by the need to set things straight, though he

was born in the U.S.A. The journey finds them both challenged by the requirements of time, finances and the emotional toll that is brought to bear for them both. The cinematography is beautiful and the roles played by Mirren and Reynolds are very convincing. It's a wonderful story.

Based on 3,443 viewers the IMDB ratings thus far are 7.6/10.



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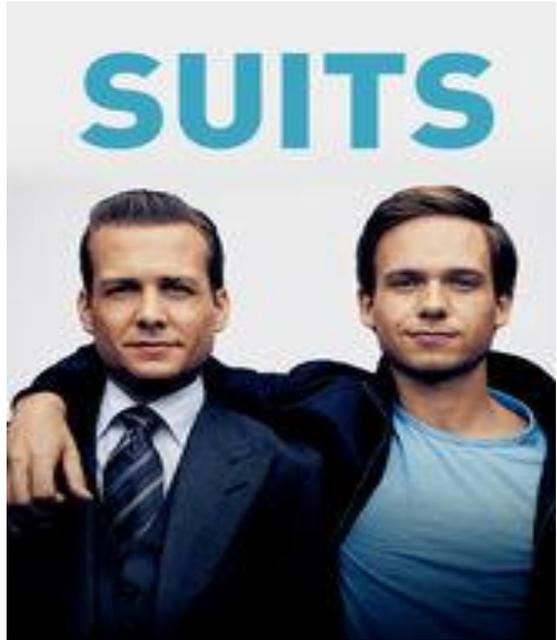
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Suits (Netflix series) 4 seasons

Starring: Gabriel Macht, Patrick J. Adams, Gina Torres, Meghan Markle, Sarah Rafferty, Rich Hoffman

Created by: Aaron Korsh



“In Suits, one of Manhattan’s top corporate lawyers (Gabriel Macht) sets out to recruit a new hotshot associate and hires the only guy that impresses him, a brilliant but unmotivated college dropout (Patrick J. Adams). Though he isn’t actually a lawyer, the legal prodigy has the book smarts of a Harvard law grad and the street smarts of a hustler. However, in order to serve justice and save their jobs, both theses unconventional thinkers must carry out a charade.”

‘Suits’ is slick, fast paced, tense and brilliantly acted. The New York skyline, glittering law offices and gorgeous attire all exude expensive fees and lifestyles. The series develops convincing charismatic characters with lives that intertwine around personal relationships, legal challenges and renegade naughtiness as they all become embroiled in keeping ‘the college dropout’ from being caught as the imposter that he most definitely is.

I thoroughly enjoyed this series. It holds your attention and manages to conclude with a palatable finale. It causes one to wonder why the series did not go further than four seasons.

One popular rating internet site “Rotten Tomatoes” has thus far given it a user rating of 94% out of 100%.




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Jicama

More Than Just a Vegetable

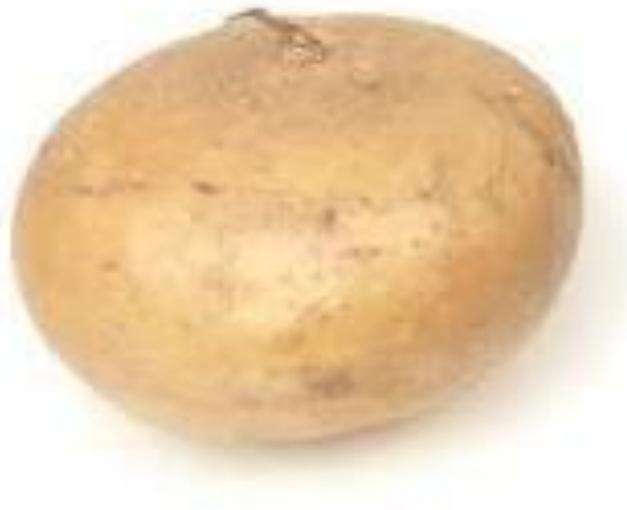
Suzanne A. Marshall

It is often a challenge to identify or to try unknown vegetables and fruits when shopping and touring the local markets in Manzanillo (or elsewhere in Mexico). Since you don't know what they are one might just ignore them until one day a dish is served by a friend or in a restaurant and you make the discovery. Over the years we have learned to love the freshness and taste of the produce that is grown in the countryside all around our beautiful coastal winter home. For me, there is simply no comparison to the taste of fruits and vegetables ripened on the vines and trees and brought directly to market.

Thanks to world-wide shipping and sophisticated transportation systems in our global economy, Canadians like me, are certainly grateful for the exotic tastes of fresh fruits and veggies that are now available all year round. We have a short growing season in Canada and thus must rely on these imports through winter and spring. But I must confess that absolutely nothing tastes as good as the locally grown products simply because those bound for export must be picked, packed and shipped prior to ripening in order to survive the journey.

I have so many old memories of my mother canning fruits and vegetables to see us through the winter months. Eventually, she turned to freezing many items when the new chest-type freezers became an everyday household appliance. But nothing compared with the fresh produce that came out of our own backyard garden. It is these fresh wholesome flavors that are found in the local Mexican markets.

My first sampling of Jicama (pronounced *hick-a-mah*) was at a social event where plates of what looked to be raw potato fries were served. They were sprinkled with a bit of lime juice and chili powder and were crunchy and delicious. Jicama is also known as yam bean and is a round fleshy taproot vegetable of the bean family. Other names are Mexican water chestnut or Mexican turnip. Its underground starchy root is one of the popular edible tuber-vegetables grown in many parts of Mexico, Central America, South Asia, and the Caribbean. They can be found in most local markets and grocery stores throughout Mexico and are extremely popular. I have yet to see them in Canada.

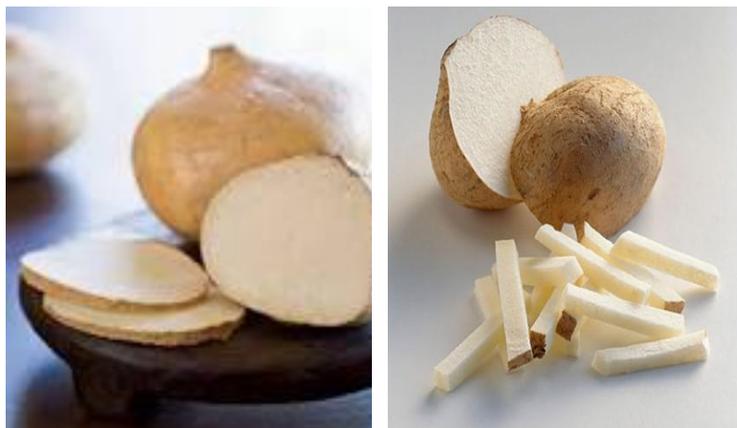


HEALTH BENEFITS OF JICAMA

- As a root vegetable Jicama is very low in calories with only 35 calories per 100g. Yet its high quality phyto-nutrition profile comprises high dietary fiber, anti-oxidants and small amounts of minerals and vitamins.
- It is one of the finest sources of soluble inulin dietary fiber. The root pulp provides 13% of fiber! Or, 2/3 of one cup equals 4.25 g of fiber. Inulin is a zero calorie sweet inert carbohydrate. Since it does not metabolize inside the human body, it's an ideal snack for diabetics and dieters.
- Jicama is rich in vitamin C. Vitamin-C is a powerful water-soluble anti-oxidant that helps rid the body of harmful free radicals, thereby offering protection from cancers, inflammation and viral cough and cold.
- Additionally, Jicama also contains small levels of vitamin B-complex and some important minerals like magnesium, copper, iron and manganese

In Mexico Jicama is available all year round. My research tells me that they could show up in the U.S.A. in the spring and summer as an import from South America. You should select firm, round and well-formed medium sized tubers. Avoid those that are bruised, cut, soft or shriveled. Once you have them home they can be stored like potatoes for up to a month. Once cut, any remainders should be refrigerated.

Wash Jicama in cool running water and pat dry. It is important to peel off the thick fibrous skin with a knife or vegetable peeler. There is an organic poison in the skins that contain *rotenone* so be sure to discard them. Otherwise Jicama is perfectly safe.



SERVING TIPS:

- Jicama has a sweet succulent apple like fruity taste. Slice into raw cubes or sticks and sprinkle with lime juice or salt or, dress with olive oil and paprika or ground chili pepper.
- As a favored root vegetable, Jicama is used in salads, stir fries, stews, soups and so on. It mates well with other common vegetables and fruits like oranges, pineapple, carrot and green beans. Serve with poultry, meat and seafood.

RECIPE SAMPLE: SPICY JICAMA FRIES

INGREDIENTS

For the Jicama Fries:

- 1 medium jicama
- 1 tablespoon oil of your choice (coconut or canola oil both work great)
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- Pinch cayenne or chili powder (or more, to taste)

For the Cilantro-Garlic-Lime Greek Yogurt Dip:

- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of ½ lime

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Peel the jicama and cut into skinny fries. You don't want to make them thick, they don't bake as well when they're wider.
3. Place the jicama in a microwave-safe bowl with a tablespoon of water. Cover and microwave for 6 minutes. This will prevent the jicama from staying too crisp and raw inside when the outside bakes.
4. As you wait for the jicama to precook in the microwave, mix together the yogurt dip ingredients and set aside.
5. If there is any water left in the bowl holding the jicama, pour it out. Drizzle the jicama with the tablespoon of oil and add the spices. Toss until evenly coated. Beware! Turmeric will stain your hands temporarily so you might want to use a utensil!
6. Spread the jicama fries out on the prepared baking sheet and bake for about 35-45 minutes, or until they begin to brown in spots, tossing once.
7. Serve warm with the dip.



AZTEC MEDICINE

By Kirby Vickery

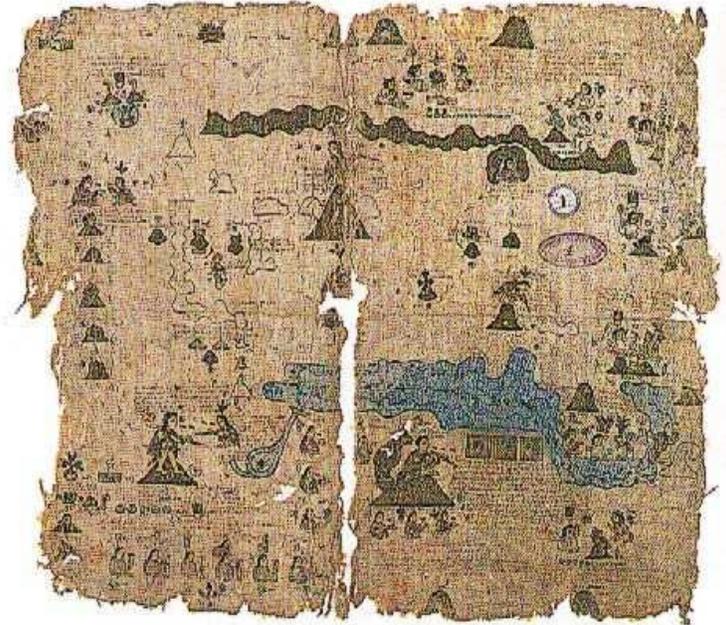
Over the past year I have had a lot of fun telling Aztec mythology stories. I have come to believe that their society was a lot closer to their mythology than other ancient peoples. For western man most all mythology belief has melded, into religion in one form or another, or into nursery rhyme, or children's stories. If you were to think about it you might agree.

The Aztec's on the other hand held a religious ceremony for every aspect of life thus making the population dependant on their own priestly society for daily guidance. There was none of, "I'll go to church if it rains otherwise Fred and I have an 8:30 tee time." Their life was one of belief and practice. Their religion reached into all aspects of their individual lives, even medicine. There was actually a list of volunteers to be sacrificed at the altar because being a sacrifice to the gods was a very honorable way to die. One of the other biggest reasons their mythology didn't go or drift into anything else is that it didn't have time. Their reign was only about a hundred years or so when the Spanish showed up. Although they did carry many beliefs from their predecessors all the way back to the 12th and 13th century.

One thing that was noted by the Spaniards was the average the Aztec lived as compared to their own life spans. Although it seems a little trite, their knowledge of medicine and the human physiology was constantly being fed fresh bodies with only their hearts cut out. A priest that could heal his parishioners would be a very popular priest and would have a natural following. The Aztec average age was thirty years above that of their conquerors.

Although part of the longer lifespan the average Aztec had was use to their very standard of personal and social hygiene and to their diet which consisted of fresh fruits, grains and vegetables. A lot of their medicine was herbal and spiritual.

Within the Aztec medical dictionary they had specialists. Off the top with all the cadavers coming from alters one of these specialties was the setting of bones and infection fighters. They knew how to apply astringents and could sew up flesh wounds using a large headed ant as a stitch. Pull the skin together. Grab one of these large ants. Push its head into place and its jaws would hook into



A page from the Florentine Codex showing the cultivation of 'metl' which is mescal or Tequila is made.

both sides of the flesh. Pop off the head and you have a suture. They even treated cataracts, hair loss, and digestive problems.

According to the Florentine Codex (1575 - 77) bladder conditions "Must be injected with the powder ground from the root of the 'cacamotic' plant. From what I read it didn't say where this 'injection was supposed to be. But the drawing left no doubt and reminded me of a prostrate exam from your local, smiling, proctologist. Other writing tell that this cure felt like chili powder being rammed up in there. Other sites say that a whole bunch wasn't needed and the victim or patient was always grateful. Another potion for this problem was made from the tail of the 'tlacuatzin.' Fracture wounds were wrapped in a powder ground from what looks like a prickly pear cactus after cleaning. Then everything was placed in a cast consisting of the resin from some plants or just some splints.

Some of what they prescribed isn't that pretty. For example, if you took a real heavy blow to the chest and were suffering chest pains as a result. Your doctor would have you drink still warm urine, mixed with the ground bodies of three or four lizards. If you modern people think that's bad just try to think how those lizards felt.

A stiff neck from a hard day at the office was treated by bathing and pressure applied to the neck area then a poultice of plants would be applied and a water drink mixed with the 'coaxtuitl' plant. I have seen this plant several times for different fixes and I believe it is a nerve relaxer or pain reliever. They also used an extract from the tobacco plant as a numbing agent.

Speaking of antibiotics, it was discovered that the Agave plant has antibiotic properties in 1955. Tequila is made from the Agave plant. It was cultivated by the Nahuatl speaking people (Aztecs) and was used for food and medicine a thousand years before the Spaniards showed up.

The Aztec and Inca were the givers of many good things to the old world. These included foods such as corn and the potato, coffee, pepper and a lot more. They also gave the old world some things which the people of Europe would rather have skipped. One of the most heinous of these is syphilis. One theory has Columbus' crew bring it back from the new world. It was treated by the Aztecs. The patient was given a drink of water mixed with the herb 'tietlemaitl' and powdered 'tialaquequetzal.' Then the patient was placed in a 'temazcal' or steam bath. I am unable to find how well this treatment worked. If you take into consideration that 'tialaquequetzal' is actually copper filings, and we use penicillin based antibiotic drugs, I would think they weren't all that successful for this one.



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The Potato

by Terry Sovil

My good friend Carlos and I were in Centro Manzanillo. It is late morning and lunch sounds good. We pop into a busy local restaurant. Part of the meal is potato salad. Is that Mexican? Back in Minnesota, United States, we had a fast food restaurant called "Taco Johns." They served potatoes with their meals, what they call "West-Mex" style food. I thought it was because it was Minnesota and the mid-west thing to do. Something the locals could relate to eating in a "Mexican Restaurant." Where tacos don't look like the tacos here and ketchup can be too spicy for many. They called them Potato Olés which would be pronounced "OH LAYS." Well, Minnesota is also the land of the Scandinavians, so I used to laugh and say "OH LEE" because we had a lot of Sven and Ole jokes about.

So I asked Carlos "Is this a normal Mexican side dish? Potato salad?" He assured me it was. How could this be? The potato came to North America via the Europeans that brought it over. Right? Remember the Irish Potato Famine? My immediate thought was that potatoes must have migrated down with donuts, smoothies, Dairy Queen and Snickers bars.

Then I got curious. How exactly did the potato come to be in Mexico? The answer was simple. The potato came from Peru and Chile. True. All my life I had thought the potato came from Europe with the settlers. And it did. The Europeans, specifically the Spanish, brought it back from the Americas and introduced it to the Europeans.

The Inca Indians in Peru were the first to cultivate potatoes around 8,000 BC to 5,000 B.C. The Incas were masters of plant domestication, especially potatoes. Their development of the potato was remarkable: from 8 species of weeds having toxic tubers to more than 3000 distinct potato varieties.

In ancient ruins in Peru and Chile, archaeologists have found potato artifacts and remains that date to 500 B.C. The Incas ate them and cultivated them. They buried them with their dead. They hid them in concealed bins in case of a war or famine. They dried them and carried them on long journeys. They called them "papas," sound familiar? They even had a prayer for them: "O Creator! Thou who givest life to all things and hast made men that



The men use the foot plow, called taclla; the women break up the clods of earth. Another woman brings corn chicha to drink.

they may live, and multiply. Multiply also the fruits of the earth, the potatoes and other food that thou hast made, that men may not suffer from hunger and misery." So the Spanish found them when they first arrived in Peru in 1532. They wrote extensively about the potato and how it was used to support Inca existence. They brought them back to Spain.

The Spanish thought they were a kind of truffle and called them "tartuffo." They noticed that sailors that ate papas didn't get scurvy. The potato went to Italy and England about 1585, to Belgium and Germany by 1587, to Austria about 1588 and to France about 1600. And just like so many things in our cultures today that is new or different it was often regarded as weird, poisonous and evil. It destroyed the soil it grew in; it caused leprosy, syphilis, early death, sterility and rampant sexuality, probably all at the same time.

It was the distinguished Sir Walter Raleigh that had brought the potato to his home near Cork, Ireland. The story is that he planted them, cultivated them and then presented some to Queen Elizabeth I. All of the proper folks were invited to a big meal featuring the potato in



every course. Sadly, the cooks were totally unfamiliar with this new food and they served up a hearty dish of boiled stems and leaves, poisonous, tossing out the lumpy tuber. It made everyone deathly ill so potatoes were banned.

Eventually potatoes were brought to the United States in the 1600's but were not widely grown. Then Scotch-Irish immigrants started to grow them in 1719. It was in 1845-1849 that the "Great Famine" or "Great Starvation" in Ireland was caused by a disease in the potato crop. The average annual diet of a "global citizen" in the first decade of the 21st century is about 33kg (73 lb) of potatoes. It remains an essential crop in Europe where production is some of the highest in the world. Rapid expansion has also occurred in southern and eastern Asia. China is now the world's largest producers and nearly a third of the world's potatoes are grown in China and India.



Potato chips: In 1853 railroad magnate Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt complained that his potatoes were cut too thick and sent them back to the kitchen at a fashionable resort in Saratoga Springs, NY. To spite his haughty guest, Chef George Crum sliced some potatoes paper thin, fried them in hot oil, salted and served them. To everyone's surprise, Vanderbilt loved his "Saratoga Crunch Chips," and potato chips have been popular ever since.

So what about potato salad? Just like the potato the adaptations came about from geography and cultures. Printed evidence of American texts around 1875 contained a French, British and German recipe. The German version included bacon and was served warm!



French Fries: They came to the U.S. when Thomas Jefferson served them in the White House. His chef, Collinet, chef for French King Louis Phillipe (reign 1830-1848), unintentionally created soufflés (or puffed) potatoes by plunging already fried potatoes into extremely hot oil to reheat them when the King arrived late for dinner one night. To the chef's surprise and the king's delight, the potatoes puffed up like little balloons.



Where am I? And where are the maps?

Señor Tech

At one time I used the free maps that were included with my AAA membership to plan and navigate vacations. Each Province and State had its own map and the details included all the little towns, villages and cities. The legend on the map showed information about city population, whether roads were paved, number of lanes, ferry crossings (before all bridges were built), and of course distance. In order to prepare for a trip, the map had to be unfolded; the sizes varied but it was not uncommon for a map to open up to dimensions 2 feet by 3 feet. Once opened, the choice of route; shortest, fastest, or most scenic needed to be prepared. If the choice was scenic, guidebooks were available as a resource to plan the route and stops. The planned route could be marked with a sharpie and then the map could be folded up. This sometimes was like a puzzle. The maps were handy as a visual tool but could be inconvenient to open on a highway if a turn was missed.

- In 1996, recognizing the importance of GPS to civilian users as well as military users, U.S. President Bill Clinton issued a policy directive declaring GPS a dual-use system and establishing an Interagency GPS Executive Board to manage it as a national asset.

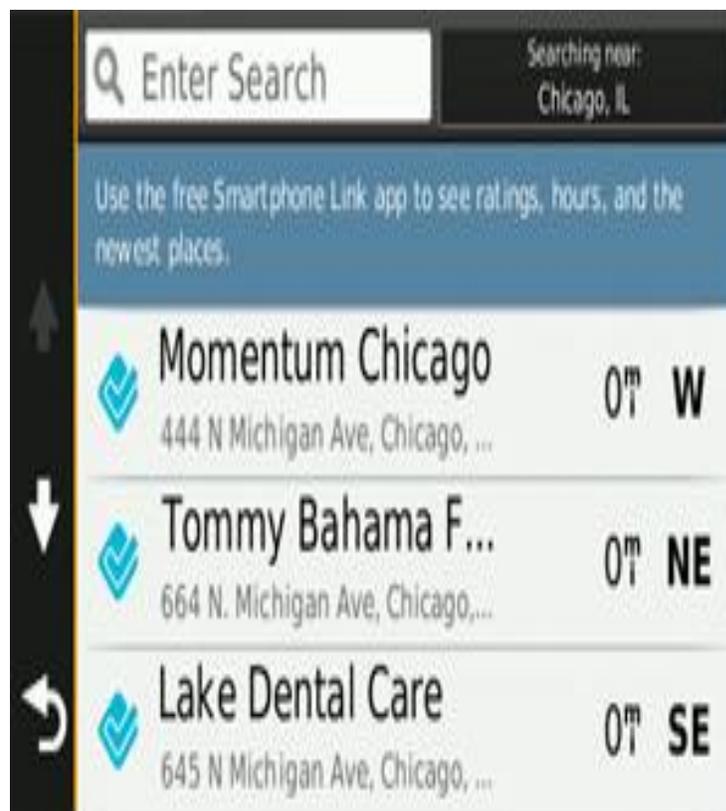
- In 1998, United States Vice President Al Gore announced plans to upgrade GPS with two new civilian signals for enhanced user accuracy and reliability, particularly with respect to aviation safety and in 2000 the United States Congress authorized the effort, referring to it as GPS III.

- On May 2, 2000 "Selective Availability" was discontinued as a result of the 1996 executive order, allowing users to receive a non-degraded signal globally.

I bought my first GPS receiver in 2002. It was included in a computer based mapping software (Delorme) and the GPS receiver connected to a USB port on a laptop. I was amazed to see my position displayed on the computer screen as I drove. I can remember, losing my direction in Portland, OR one evening in 2003 on a road

trip to San Francisco. I booted up my trusty Toshiba, opened Delorme Maps, and within minutes was back on the interstate.

The computer GPS solution was not convenient so I purchased a Garmin handheld model built for automobiles. This solution proved much more productive. The device had a number of features to make road travel planning easier. Once the destination and start points were entered, the device would calculate the quickest route, shortest route, routes without tolls, paved highways only, and numerous other parameters. The selected routes showed the calculated time to travel based on driving speeds the driver selected. On the road, the position of the vehicle is displayed along with other data such as how far to the destination as well as arrival time. The devices also provide turn by turn instructions, if you set the voice feature.





In 2009, I purchased the Garmin North American app for my iPhone for \$49.00. It has all the features of the stand-alone unit and maps are updated at no charge. The North American maps include Mexico. I had to pay an additional \$115.00 to get Mexico on my handheld Garmin device,

GPS software apps are available for all the major smartphones. But Google Maps, Apple Maps, and WAZE are free. If you have a data plan, these will work just fine. But if you are in Mexico without a data plan, a GPS app will work without the need for data.

Maps were a fun way to plan trips, but GPS is easier and you don't have to search for the maps while driving.

Bulleted information - Wikipedia

