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Manzanillo SUN

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

In this Issue

Publishers Page

General Interest

Investments

Yann Kostic

I want my TV

Senior Tech

At the Movies - Now you see me

Suzanne Marshall

Nature

Flame Tree

Tommy Clarkson

I met Charlie

Tommy Clarkson

Living in Manzanillo

Manzanillo in the summer

Freda Rumford

Buen Provescho

Suzanne Marshall

History

Early Mexican History IV - Coozana Kirby Vickery

Food

Mango Mousse

Lamb popsicles

Sausage Rolls

Freda Rumford



Heron
Dave Boroughs



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

All articles should be 1000 words or
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words if accompanied by photos (.jpg)

Pictures appropriate for the article are
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Is Now a Good Time for You to Reconsider your Investment Nest Egg? Yann Kostic

The US active population is approaching a retirement crisis, even as the economy and stock markets are seemingly improved: New data shows that 57 percent of the US active population and retirees report less than \$25,000 in total household savings and investments, excluding their homes.

That data is the result of a survey conducted by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), and it's jarring because, in 2008, only 49 percent of active population and retirees reported having this little money saved.

Today, the situation has reached crisis levels: In fact, only half of the 1,003 workers and 251 retirees surveyed said they could come up with \$2,000 for an unexpected need in the next month.

The outlook is no better. The percentage of workers who have saved for retirement plunged from 75 percent in 2009 to 66 percent in 2012. According to the survey, 28 percent of workers are not confident they will have enough money to retire comfortably - the highest level in the study's 23-year history.

One problem is we're living longer. For example, a man who reaches age 65 in 2013 is expected to live an additional 20.5 years, up from 19.5 in earlier projections. Our extended lifespans will force us to stretch our retirement savings.

We're not relying on pension plans either; fewer and fewer Americans are covered by traditional pension plans. According to US Department of Labor data compiled by the EBRI, pension plan participation declined dramatically from 28 percent in 1979 to 3 percent in 2011.

If you think you need to reevaluate your own retirement savings, your advisor can help.

Yann Kostic is a Money Manager and Financial Advisor (RIA) with Atlantis Wealth Management specializing in retirees (or soon to be), self-reliant women and Expats in Mexico. Yann works with TD Ameritrade Institutional as the custodian of client's assets. He splits his time between Central Florida and the Central Pacific Coast of Mexico. Comments, questions or to request his Newsletter "News You Can Use" Contact him at Yannk@AtlantisWealth.com, in Mexico: (314) 333-1295 or in the US: (321) 574-1529.

monkey's

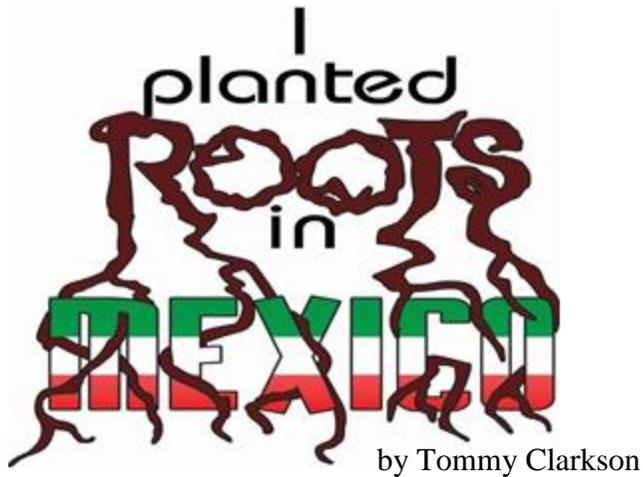
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Flame Tree, *Delonix regia*

Family: *Leguminosae* or *Fabaceae*

(Also known as: Flamboyant Tree, Royal Poinciana, Peacock Flower and Mexican Flame Tree.)

This absolute stunner goes by some other names as well. In Spanish it is sometimes called the *Arbol de Fuego* - Tree of Fire. And in Mexico, Costa Rica and parts of Central America it is often referred to as Malinche. This was the name of an Indian girl who was said to be so beautiful that she persuaded Hernan Cortez to spare her people from extermination by his conquistadors.

Metaphorically speaking, if you'd like to light a fire of bright color in your garden, this might be the tree for you! In fact, Robert Lee Riffle – who I consider to have been the preeminent tropical botanist – wrote in his classic tome, “The Tropical Look”, “It is the world’s most beautiful flowering tree.” That just about properly sizes it up!

There are a dozen or so different trees called the Flame Tree with all of them being stunningly beautiful. Those most seen here in Mexico, are the *Delonix regia* which requires ample space and full sun to reach its umbrella-shaped (often wider than its height) mature stature of 18 meters.

The genus name is derived from the Greek words *delos* (meaning conspicuous), and *onyx*, meaning claw, referring to the appearance of the spectacular flowers. For those into genealogy, it is related to the Tamarind and Mimosa Tree!

This spectacular, tropical, shade tree has a smooth, gray colored bark. Its feathery, fern-like leaves are evergreen if watered year around but will drop off if the tree



There is something almost indescribable, protecting, yet massive, dark and yet vibrant. . . and, of course, flamboyant. Nothing in the tropical landscape is more beautiful.” **Robert Lee Riffle**

becomes parched during the dry season. Appearing with its new leaves are masses of brilliantly vivid, five-petaled flowers that range from red/vermillion/orange/yellow to a pale apricot in color.

As one of the most colorful trees in the world, the Flame Tree puts on a riotous floral show during a protracted spring and summer timeframe. These flowers are large, with four, spoon-shaped, solid colored, petals up to 8 cm long, and a fifth upright petal called the standard, which is slightly larger and is spotted with yellow and/or white.

This tree flowers best in areas that have two distinct seasons. Following its blooms come long, flattened, leathery dark brown/black seed pods, 60 cm long and 5 cm wide. These seed pods are used in the Caribbean as a percussion instrument known as the “*shak-shak*” or maraca. Those noise making, individual seeds inside these pods are small, weighing around 0.4 gram. Beyond noise, in these islands the pods are also, sometimes, used as fuel for fires.



Well named, the riot of brilliant red flowers of the Flame Tree are a delight to see

The compound, doubly pinnate leaves have a feathery appearance and are a characteristic light, bright green. Each leaf is 30-50 cm long and has 20 to 40 pairs of primary leaflets or pinnae on it, with each of these further divided into 10-20 pairs of secondary leaflets or pinnules. A malleable sort, this tree can tolerate aggressive pruning and be kept rather small.

It is a fast growing at about 1 ½ meters (5 ft) per year, is tolerant of a wide range of well drained soils, likes full sun and tolerates salty conditions. But it is best to provide protection from strong winds and they don't like

living on an openly exposed beach. If the tree does not receive regular and deep watering it forms large surface roots which, actually, only add to its attractiveness!

The native habitat of *Delonix regia* was, purportedly, unknown until the 1930s, when it was "rediscovered" in that land of so many magnificently different plants – the island nation of Madagascar. It is now widely grown throughout the Caribbean (where the locals simply call the tree "flamboyant"), Africa, the Canary Islands, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and in Southern China. Because of the flower's brilliance, and so many growing naturally in the area, the Puerto Rican town of Penuelas has been nicknamed "The Valley of the Flames"; in Vietnam, this tree is called "Phượng vĩ", or Phoenix's Tail; and in Miami there is an annual festival to celebrate the flowering of the Flame Tree.

A few negatives are that as a result of its shallow, wide-spreading roots, under-plantings generally do not work; its roots can cause problems for building foundations, walls and sidewalks; its large woody pods and brittle branches can get broken off in the wind; and the seedlings that come up around the tree base can be a bit of a nuisance – but I still like 'em!

So, in simple summation, if you've the space, this would make a superlative – and spectacular - addition to your gardens!



Its flowers are large, with four, spoon-shaped, solid colored, scarlet-red or orange-red petals and a fifth upright petal called the standard, which is slightly larger and is spotted with yellow and/or white.





Manzanillo in the Good 'Ole Summer Time

Freda Rumford

In Mexico all months have their own special beauty, and really, it depends upon your interests as to which you prefer. Many people, who live in Manzanillo for the winter season, also have a second home or rent an apartment in Ajijic or Lake Chapala (near Guadalajara) for the summer. The reason? The high humidity, heat, and rains in both Manzanillo and the coastal regions from the end of June through September which can be very oppressive. Many leave for Northern climes but also many really enjoy this time of few visitors. They don't mind the heat and love the lightning displays.

The earlier months of the rains offer a very gradual increase in rain frequency as we progress into mid-summer. Then, there is a very noticeable waning of humidity in late September/October through to November when the 'no humidity' season and the *Snow Birds* arrive. The rain usually starts by coming once or twice a week for a short while in the evenings, and progresses by gathering in intensity until there is a point where it does not wait to form drops but comes down in sheets like a monsoon.

During the summer months there is much complaining of the humidity and an actual longing for rain to come and wash the heat away for a while. More time is spent in swimming pools and showers than normal and locals walk around with a mopping cloth in their shoulder. That seems strange at first until the continual sting of perspiration becomes a nuisance and the relief of mopping ones neck, face, and arms is realised.

The ocean at this time of year is usually very warm, almost like a bath in fact and it is a lovely way to spend a day, just floating. That is provided the waves are not too high or pounding and a storm not on its way. If either are apparent or forecast, then head for the nearest swimming pool instead. That may not be particularly refreshing either but at least the pool is a good reason to

be wet all over. Take note here that the ocean is almost always calmer in the morning before 1 p.m. and after 4 p.m. and that applies year round.

Another good way to beat the heat is to go to the mall and find a nice cold ice cream in one of the many delicious flavours offered or the Popsicle-like *palettas* made from fresh fruit which are really cooling. This is a great time to sit on a bench and people watch.

Do make sure that during the summer time you drink plenty of liquids. If you become thirsty, then already it is too late as you are dehydrated and heat stroke is both a possibility and a danger. Sun bathing is absolutely not a good idea at this time of year as the sun is high and hot. Sun screen at all times is an absolute must. Although some summer time clothing is touted as being a protector from the sun, most is no protection at all. Remember dark colors absorb the sun's rays while light colors reflect. People can even get sunburnt in the ocean whilst wearing T-shirts so be aware of the dangers.

This is a great time to head inland to enjoy the Mexican country side, visit the museums and art galleries or perhaps take a course or two at the University of Guadalajara or San Luis Potosi in central Mexico. Still beware of the sun when inland, and wear loose fitting clothes and a hat. An umbrella can be a good friend during the summer months and not just for the rain.

In Manzanillo, the storms come up from the south and circle the town with clouds and the sky getting blacker. The storm erupts when clouds are finally pushed back by the mountains east of Manzanillo and the cacophony begins.

The storms that occur increasingly during the summer are marvellous to watch. They are mostly electrical and can develop significant dynamic displays of both sheet

and fork lightening at the same time. Storm watching is like watching an incredible firework display as the sky is lit up all around the city and ocean. Pets don't like the noise, so take pity and allow them to stay hiding under the bed if that is their preference. In extreme pet fright, they probably would prefer to be held tightly so that the big noises can't get them, so keep them company and consoled. But for humans, standing under cover of a tile (not palapa) roof, the storm can seem almost magical, a real life thunder and lightening polka directed by Mother Nature. Also standing under a tree on the golf course or in the swimming pool is ill-advised

It is a very good time to turn off all computers, TV's, telephones and other electrical apparatus before the storms start getting noisy or the rains start pelting down in earnest. Actually take the plugs from the wall as everything can be fried. In fact offices not moving quickly enough have been known to lose all their equipment, as have we. This can also happen to electrical appliances and sometimes even the heavy duty surge protector does not help. It may possibly help long enough for you to run from the easy chair to the electrical outlet to unplug but don't bank on it. The phone and modem are usually the first to go.

Even so it is a good idea to have all electrical items on a surge protector or to unplug where essential at night. The unstable electrical surges in Manzanillo are well known and can harm electronic items at any time of the year. Every so often we will hear a loud bang and know that a transformer has blown and we will be out of power. It must be said that the Electric Company, when knowing of a storm approaching are well prepared to step into action. *Also they will turn off power in an earthquake if a certain number is reached. This means that likelihood of being electrocuted is slight even though you may break a leg falling over an unseen item.*

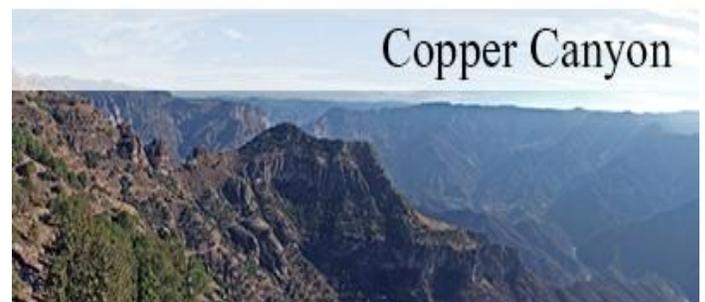
Now, if you are horrified at the thought of Mexico in the summer time, this is a good time to say that many people hearing of the discomfort level have been thoroughly surprised at how tolerable it is for them. Probably, if you don't know of it ahead of time, it can be overwhelming. The beauty of the countryside when the rains come is a delight. The deserts come alive with many previously unseen florals after just one rainfall, so a drive in the country is an absolute must. Watching the electrical storm out at sea the wonderful power of the waves should not be missed. Houses are generally cool even without air conditioning and with the very thick walls of the houses and the cross breeze that can be felt with opening doors and windows.

Personally, I do not like September in Manzanillo. That is only one month however and is not like braving a Calgary winter for seven months a year in the below freezing temperatures. Many people are gradually shifting from their main house being up north to living year round in Manzanillo and then visiting friends and family up north. People are also becoming younger and younger as they move south to warmer climes.

Should you decide to try it you will be welcomed in Manzanillo by the delightful native people who live here and the Northern implants who have made this lovely city their home. Is it Eden? No! But pretty darn close!

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An Early Mexican History IV

By Kirby Vickery

Father Juan de Cordova cataloged the early myths of Mexico as I stated in the first writing in this series. As stated then, he had everything cross checked and verified for accuracy so there is little left to the modern imagination as to just what was believed and practiced by the Nahuatl speaking peoples. Within the translation there is a conception of the beginning of time or a creation story which has a small dent in it probably due to the duality of the deities.

There are a people related to the Mixtecs. The Zapotec and their 'creation myth' is similar to that of the Mixtecs. Their chief God was called Cozaana as was the maker of all beasts. Another God named Huichaana was the maker of men and fishes. Thus we have two separate creations for men and animals. One, today, would assume that Cozaana would apply to the sun as the creator of all beasts, but, strangely enough, is alluded to in Cordova's dictionary as "procreatrix," whilst he is undoubtedly a male diety. Huichaana, the creator of men and fishes, is, on the other hand, alluded to as "water," or "the element of water, and "goddess (not god, but (from the duality) the of generation)." Thus, she represents the woman or female part within the Zapotec creative agency.



Cozaana

Within the Mixtec creation-myth the actual creator and the first pair of tribal gods, who were also considered the progenitors of animals-to the savage equal inhabitants of



the world with himself. They were also the light and dark of the legend responsible for day and night. Nine-Snake and Nine-Cave are the same two gods who later became Quetzalcoatl and Xolotl. The second is a fabricating of the Zapotec deity and were regarded as twins. In some ways Quetzalcoatl was looked upon as a creator, and in the Mexican calendar followed the Father and Mother, or original sexual deities, being placed in the second section as the creator of the world and man.

I have found that there are many tales of a horrendous flood taking place. Some like the great flood of North America's Missoula Lake about 13,000 years ago happened before anyone was around to write about them. It flooded eastern Oregon and Washington State for about 55 years. Others were written about and one of these made the Bible.

The different Nahuatl speaking tribes tell of several through time. One of which the Abbé Bresseur de Bourbourg has translated one from the Codex Chimalpopoca, a work in Nahuatl dating from the latter part of the sixteenth century. It recounts the doings of the Mexican Noah and his wife as follows:

"And this year was that of Ce-calli, and on the first day all was lost. The mountain itself was submerged in the water, and the water remained tranquil for fifty-two springs.

"Now toward the close of the year Titlacahuan had forewarned the man named Nata and his wife Nena, saying, 'Make no more *pulque*, but straightway hollow out a large cypress, and enter it when in the month Tozoztli the water shall approach the sky.' They entered it, and when Titlacahuan had closed the door he said, 'Thou shalt eat but a single ear of maize) and thy wife but one also.'

"As soon as they had finished eating, they went forth, and the water was tranquil; for the log did not move anymore; and opening it they saw many fish.

"Then they built a fire, rubbing together pieces of wood, and they roasted fish. The gods Citallinicue and Citallatonac, looking below, exclaimed, 'Divine Lord, what means that fire below? Why do they thus smoke the heavens?'

"Straightway descended Titlacahuan-Tezcatlipoca, and commenced to scold, saying, 'What is this fire doing here?' And seizing the fishes he molded their hinder parts and changed their heads, and they were at once transformed into dogs."



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Buen Provecho! – Suzanne A. Marshall

There are many different experiences to be noted about buying groceries in Manzanillo. I won't write about where, as I have already shared the best places to shop for groceries in a previous article. I thought that I would share some of our experiences having tried and tasted so many of the basic foods.

Now some would say an **onion** is an onion, and so would I. But I have discovered that the white onions in Manzanillo are incredibly mild, sweet and tasty. As a matter of fact you can chop them easily without the usual eruption of tears. Onions for me tend to be harsh on the digestive tract but not these yummy babies; I add them to almost everything: stews, soups, stir fries, oven roasts and salads. And I can happily tell you that I have not experienced the otherwise typical roster of symptoms.



sweet Vidalia onions



fresh salsa with cilantro

In Canada, we rely a great deal on importation of many foods, so in the case of spices for example, I have not been a big fan of cilantro. This is because I always used the dried spices version of this spice especially during

winter season when local market garden growers are out of season.

Cooking in Mexico commonly includes the use of **cilantro** but it is fresh. The taste difference is incomparable. I am now an avid fan of fresh cilantro. Again it is sweet and fresh tasting. Every single type of fresh salsa that is served at your local Manzanillo restaurants includes chopped fresh cilantro (and those fabulous onions) and I have evolved an excellent quick salsa in my Manzanillo kitchen that wouldn't be the same without fresh cilantro.

Have you found yourself only wanting half a banana instead of a whole one? Then the other half banana lies around for tomorrow. Our house keeper in Manzanillo is also our daily Spanish tutor on all things about the house. She calls the tiny bananas we buy '**platanitos**' which I think means tiny banana (platan). These clusters of tiny bananas which are about a third the size of one regular banana are really wonderful. They are a little sweeter and slightly more flavorful than the large bananas and we are constantly snacking on them, slicing one onto cereal or into our yogurt or ice-cream. If you like bananas you'll love these little guys.



Tiny bananas (platanitos as the locals call them)

I must admit that I have not tried some of the fruits and veggies in the markets because frankly, I don't know what they are or how to prepare them. But we're beginning to enjoy a few items that we were unfamiliar with such as a vegetable called **chayote**. Chayote looks like a green pear with a puckered bottom. It was served to me with the side vegetables at a restaurant one time and so I tasted and enjoyed a very mild and firm

'squash type' vegetable, still slightly firm and bathed in butter. It was very good and we have been cooking these at home ever since. Just chop or slice and steam or stir-fry with butter or however you enjoy your fresh veggies. There is no need to peel the skin.



Chayote Squash

To my great delight I have found a wonderful selection of ground **coffees** in all of the major super markets. There was a time when a preference for decaffeinated coffees could not be satisfied, they were simply not available. If you are ordering coffee in a restaurant there are many who do not serve decaf but will offer 'Sanka' in single serve coffee packets with a mug of boiling water. For me, not so good but I do enjoy any brand of 'high' test or 'low' test coffees at home. Although you will find imported brands from the U.S., Arabia or Colombia you cannot go wrong by supporting the local economy and purchasing the Mexican brands. Delicious!

I have always been a **lemon** lover. However, in spite of this wonderful fruit being a major export of Mexico we have had difficulty finding them when shopping. Instead we have found mountains of limes. Lime juice is another of those staples that shows up at the tables of restaurants and homes in Mexico and we have become certifiably addicted to them ourselves. Lime juice forms the basis of many dishes again like salsas and it is simply delicious squeezed over fish dishes and steaming vegetables. And of course you can find this staple in Margaritas, topping a cool beer or popped in your mouth after a shot of tequila!! (...er so I'm told...)



Lemons and limes

I thought I knew what **vanilla** was until I tried the real vanilla produced in Mexico. That quite expensive artificial stuff they provide back in Canada is simply that - artificial. We are spoiled rotten now by the amazingly rich flavor of the real vanilla. We have found a brand we like called 'Orlando' but I also tried a small unknown name from Wal-Mart and it turned out to be just as good.



Aromatic vanilla beans and flower

I like to put a capful with my coffee grounds when I am brewing a pot of coffee. It is truly wonderful! I now have a list of people I bring gifts of vanilla back to each spring. This year I forgot about ourselves thinking we had plenty. Turns out we did not and I ended up calling one of those friends to see if they had any vanilla left and thank goodness they were able to share part of the gift I had given them. We usually buy vanilla by the one liter bottles.

OK! **Tortilla Soup** fans, or it's other name **Aztec Soup**, you are going to be thrilled with this bit of news if you haven't discovered it already! It is a favorite dish that we make for ourselves and friends in our Manzanillo kitchen.

This is a short cut to a delicious version of this very popular dish. One day, while perusing the grocery aisles and translating the Spanish labels, lo and behold I see in the soup products 'Sopa de Tortilla' under the Campbell's Soup label. Sure enough, it's the flavor we all crave.

We've even wondered about sneaking some cans home in our suitcases but of course weight is an issue. But while you are there in Manzanillo enjoy this: heat the Tortilla soup according to instructions; we add peeled shrimp or chicken chunks for a meal in a bowl. Throw in a handful or two of tortilla strips (commonly found in the bakery sections). Then when ladling the soup into soup bowls and while it is still hot, sprinkle on any kind of grated cheese (we like the white cheeses), throw on a dollop of sour cream and top with a few chunks of ripe avocado and serve. We have prepared this for friends and received rave reviews. By the time you sit down and put your spoon in the bowl, the cheese has softened and stretches onto your spoon! Enjoy!



I could share more at this point, but I'll save it for some other time. I'm off to the kitchen. Happy cooking in Manzanillo.



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I Want My MTV..... Señor Tech

....Or news from back home. In Manzanillo there are few choices to get news from home. News is available online, but for television news or entertainment from Canada or the US, read on.

If you have Shaw Direct Satellite system, you can set up a dish on the building roof and connect to a Shaw Direct receiver. Americans can use their Direct TV, and DISH Satellites and receivers to access their programming.

If you are not able to attach a Satellite dish on your building or you do not subscribe to these services, you may want to consider a Slingbox. This is the option my spouse and I use. The quality is good and we can program and control our home PVR remotely. I connect my laptop to a television monitor and watch HD content in Manzanillo that has been recorded in Canada.

Slingbox (www.slingbox.com) is a set top box that connects to your cable box, or satellite receiver. An internet connection is required at both ends. You can watch your content anywhere on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. You can watch on a television by connecting a video cable (HDMI, DVI or VGA) to your computer.



Slingbox 350



Slingbox 500

If you are interested in setting up a Slingbox, here are some tips. The model 350 sells for \$189.99, and the model 500 for \$299.99. The model 350 will suffice for most users. For the best picture quality, ensure the upload speed of your home internet connection is over 2 Mbps. At the receiving end, your internet download speed should be 3.5 Mbps or greater. The Slingbox package includes all cables required to connect to your cable or satellite receiver. After the cables have been connected, install the software on your computer

and you are ready to watch your home television anywhere in the world. There are no monthly fees required to use a Slingbox.

You can control your home receiver or PVR using the software remote. There are apps for Android and iOS tablets and smartphones.

If you don't want spend money on a Slingbox, you can order Telecable or SKY Satellite in Manzanillo. They offer some US channels.

If you have a topic you would like covered, or require further information on this topic, please contact me at techguy@senortech.ca.

Señor Tech resides in Manzanillo during the winter and Canada in the summer and fall.



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With Diamonds*

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I Meet Charlie by Tommy Clarkson

(Note: Some may recall from previous pieces I've written that, a while back, I learned that - much to my surprise and amazement - I seem to be able to converse with certain animals. There was the startled **iguana** in our bathroom, the beautiful **Mariposa de la Muerte** (Butterfly of Death), a lisping **saltwater crocodile** from Santiago's mangroves, Manfred the **praying mantis** who helped me in a poker game, the baby Snookum Bear (**White-Nosed Coatimundi**), and, of course, Herman, the **Green Breasted Mango Hummingbird**. Well, recently I made yet another new animal friend.)

Nearby I heard what someone had graphically described to me as the sound of a loud, unmuffled, engine - with something broken - trying to start. . . then there was another, and another. I sat quiet and calm and scanning the trees, far and wide in the uninhabited, nearby trees and bushes, but sight of the "whatevers" alluded me.

Slowly - not yet fully awake - I turned in the darkness refilling my coffee cup and then returned to my squint-eyed peering into the early morning murkiness not yet lit by a risen sun. Suddenly, near me in the fronds of a tall coconut palm, came that repetitive, raucous rattle. Quietly, its source had flown in while my back was turned. Slowly, I leaned forward and listened.

Then, to my surprise the rather brash rattling refrain took on meaning and came to me as words!

"We've seen you looking for us quite a few mornings now and the guys and I decided that you seemed to be a decent sort."

"So who are you," I asked.

Staccatolike he answered, *"My name's Charlie . . . Charlie Chachalaca. What's yours?"*

I answered, then asked, "So what sort of bird are you?"

"Well, as you may have noticed, by our own choice, we're rather secretive, hard to spot and are most "talkative" around dawn or dusk. We're - as my name says - Chachalacas - actually Plain Chachalacas. Some folks around here call us Mexican Tree Pheasants - a somewhat prissy moniker I think," he chattered.

"Our generic name comes from the Greek work that means "pullet" or "domestic hen" - but we are far from being domesticated! Our common name, rather obviously, comes from our loud, four noted cackle that most folks - unlike you



who understand us - is that with which so many seem to find so fascinating. . . don't know why, we're just talking with each other!"

All told - perched throughout our whole Chachalaca family tree (if you'll excuse the pun) there are approximately 50 species. We range from up north in Texas through here in Mexico to southern South America. Actually, we of the "Plain" branch of the family are the only members of the family to move as far north as the United States. And, if you will forgive me for saying so, as sentient, purportedly sensible, creatures you all are making one heck of a mess of what my ancestors told us all was once a really great locale! I certainly wish no personal umbrage but ya' gotta' know that, we shake our feathered heads at how you seem bent - as a culture - to destroy yourselves, politically, environmentally and culturally."

"I understand Charlie and actually couldn't agree more. That's why we moved down here where we hope Mexico doesn't follow Gringolandia in their mistakes," I responded. "But, the foibles of humanity aside, tell me more about you."

Obviously proud to be able to share such information, in a veritable machine gun torrent of words he said, "We're not like our lame brain domesticated chicken kin, we're, for the most part, of the arboreal sort and prefer to forage in trees. Actually, we're rather acrobatic and can eat in some rather precarious positions - like upside down!"

"As you can see, fully grown - which I am - we're about the same size as those fancified, hoity-toity, 'better than the rest of you' relation of ours, the Ring Neck Pheasants - which is to say a bit short of two feet in length, weighing in the range of 11 to 24 ounces. As to immediate family, every year my wife, Chiquita, lays two to four eggs in our - what you'd call a - flimsy-appearing - nest that we laboriously construct of moss and leaves on tree limb forks. Newborns take three to four weeks to hatch but once they are dry, our downy baby chicks are able to cling to branches, follow their mom and even fly short distances within a week of hatching. . . can yours do that?" he merrily cackled.

"Nope," I acknowledged.

"Let's see, what else might you like to know about us? We're pretty much vegans in that we, prefer leaves, berries, and seeds but, while we won't stoop to scrape in the dirt, we'll gobble up an insect of two if we come across them. We also like cracked corn and milo that you humans give to our dim-witted, domesticated cousins," he added with a tinge of scorn in his rather rough voice.

"Sometimes, if we're down on the ground "breaking bread" with our tame - and dumb - relation we'll lean down and show off our long, white tipped, greenish-yellow under-tail feathers. They are, significantly, the brightest part of our otherwise somewhat drab olive- brown appearance which is slightly darker brown on our backs and grayish brown on our heads. Also, we're not tight knit clusterers for, as a rule, we hang out in loose flocks of four to six.

"As you can see by me being up here high in this palm, we can fly. But we often run or hope rather than "take to wing". Though I'm told we're rather cool looking when we glide away from predators or other interlopers!"

"Lastly, as to our life span, one of our years is equivalent to five to eight of yours. So, if you will excuse me, I need to get on with my life and, anyway, I hear Chiquito calling."

With that, off he flew.

And he was correct. He did look cool, after those few wing flaps, as he glides away!



BEST STEAK HOUSE



Mango Mousse Parfaits

recipe courtesy of www.cookingchanneltv.com



Ingredients

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 large ripe mangoes, peeled, pits removed and chopped
- A pinch of ground cardamom
- A pinch of ground fennel
- 3 egg whites
- 1 cup 35-percent whipping cream
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
- Chopped pistachios, for garnish

Directions

Heat the sugar and 1/4 cup water in a medium saucepan over medium heat and cook until the sugar has dissolved, about 3 minutes. Add the chopped mangoes and let steep for 2 minutes. Add the ground cardamom and fennel and blend with an immersion blender until completely smooth. Measure 2 cups of the puree and set aside. Transfer the remaining puree to a large bowl and allow to cool completely.

In a medium bowl, whip the egg whites to stiff peaks. In a separate bowl, whip the cream to soft peaks. Gently fold first the egg whites into the cooled mango puree and then the whipped cream. Refrigerate until cold.

Grind the cardamom and fennel seeds in a mortar and pestle and stir into the reserved mango puree. Fill the bottom half of each of 3 martini glasses or parfait cups with the puree and then fill the rest of the way with the chilled mango mousse. Garnish with a sprinkle of pistachios.

TOTAL TIME: 1 hr 25 min
Prep: 20 min
Inactive Prep: 1 hr

YIELD: 3 to 4 servings
LEVEL: Easy
Cook: 5 min




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Lamb Popsicles

recipe courtesy of www.cookingchanneltv.com



Ingredients

- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1 tablespoon grated garlic
- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 green chili, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped green mango
- 1 tablespoon dried celery leaves
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon cardamom seeds
- A pinch of salt

- A pinch of pepper
- Neutral oil, for oiling the grill

Directions

Place the lamb, garlic, ginger, onions, chili, mango, celery leaves, garam masala, cardamom, salt and pepper into a bowl and mix well. Press about 2 heaping tablespoons of the mixture onto one end of each skewer to make "popsicles." They can be oblong or round as long as they adhere to the skewers and don't fall off during grilling.

Preheat a grill to medium-high and oil it. Grill the lamb popsicles until cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes per side.

Garam Masala: It can include black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, cardamom, dried chiles, fennel, mace, nutmeg and other spices. Bought in Indian stores or can be made at home

Celery leaves are a substitute for fenugreek leaves.. while doesn't have the slight maple flavor, you can add a few drops of syrup

TOTAL TIME: 25 min	YIELD: 8-12 Skewers
Prep: 15 min	Level: Easy
Inactive Prep: --	Cook: 10 min

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Cooking around the world

Sausage Rolls

Freda Rumford

The pastry given previous may be used for this recipe or, if available, the store bought puff pastry may be preferred. I once watched Mona Brun, the home economist for Woodward's Department stores in Canada make sausage rolls and it was such an arduous procedure I doubt anyone would follow her instructions. She cut each piece of pastry into a small wrapper and rolled each piece of sausage separately, Far too time consuming for me.

Sausage rolls, if too fat, the meat may not be cooked in the middle and they will likely open at the sides.

Sausage Rolls

- 1lb sausage meat or skinned sausages (in Mexico the Johnsonville breakfast sausages work)
- 1 packet Puff Pastry or 1/3 Anna's pastry recipe (the balance can be refrigerated for another use.) if making for a crowd, use it all.
- Water to seal rolls
- Beaten Egg for glazing

- 1) Roll pastry into thin sheet
- 2) Take two or three sausages and with the hands roll them together in a little flour on the counter until they make one long sausage tube.
- 3) Starting on the left of the pastry sheet place the sausage tube on the pastry about 2 inches in from the edge. Fold the left hand edge of the pastry over the sausage to about ½ inch pastry on the right hand side of the sausage.
- 4) With a pastry brush, moisten the edge of the bottom layer of pastry and press the overlapped pastry down upon it.
- 5) With a sharp knife, cut the enveloped pastry down the long side.
- 6) Cut the rolls into desirable and equal lengths and place on a cookie sheet for baking.
Make 2 or 3 slits in the top to allow air to escape, then brush tops with beaten egg
- 7) When all are ready, bake in a 400* oven for about 20 minutes or until golden.

Let rest on a cake rack until cool. Try to resist the temptation to sample to early, the sausage in the centre is HOT and will burn.



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AT THE MOVIES -Suzanne A. Marshall



Now You See Me – Crime/Thriller

This film takes you into the world of illusion and keeps you guessing until the end. It's fast paced with lots of twists and special effects.

A group of street magicians become world famous as an illusionist act who during elaborate stage shows, pull off daring bank robberies thousands of miles away against corrupt businesses and then share the stolen profits with the audience. An elite squad of FBI agents are on their trail as the plot unfolds. It isn't 'who dunnit' but 'how'.

Imdb gives this film a score of 7.5/10 based on 28,000 votes. We really enjoyed this film.

Starring: Jesse Eisenberg, Mark Ruffalo, and Woody Harrelson with appearances from Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine.

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