

January 2013

# Manzanillo **SUN**

Manzanillo's Lifestyle E-Magazine

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Niños

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Hilda Pita de Santiago Ramirez



**Elegant Schefflera**, *Dizygotheca elegantissima*, *Aralia elegantissima* or *Schefflera elegantissima*

**Family:** *Arabiaceae* or *Schefflera*

(Also known as False Aralia, Finger Aralia, Spider Aralia, or Thread-Leaf Aralia)



No, this is not pot, hemp, ganga, Mary Jane, swag or any of its other scores of names! (You know of what we speak – that wicked weed, cannabis, which Bill Clinton said he never inhaled so many years ago!)

It is, in fact a rather attractive, understory (a plant growing below taller trees), evergreen shrub or smallish tree. Originally from New Caledonia, it can grow to anywhere between two to seven meters. It sports six to ten shiny, dark green to blackish, very slender, serrated (edged with notches or with projections resembling the teeth of a saw), palmate leaf. These are reddish underneath and coppery in color as

they unfold but then darken with maturity. A great container plant, the larger it grows the bigger the leaflets will become.

They do not like full sun preferring “bright shade”. They do require ample, regular watering in well drained, humusy soil and protection from the wind. (Note: Wilted leaves are a sign of overwatering.) Young ones – with straight stems – are seldom branched while the adult plants do so in the upper parts of their trunks.

Slow growing, over time it will lose its lower leaves. Should you wish, for whatever reason, to keep it short and shrubby,

you can cut it back each year – up to six inches from the soil level – in the Spring. New offsets will grow from its base.

Not only do these not grow as large “in captivity” as they might in the wild, but sadly they seldom bloom in cultivation.

When it has outgrown its pot, move it to a new pot home – but use the smallest container that will hold its “plant feet” as it does best when its roots are confined. To prevent toppling, taller plants should be grown in heavier containers.

If you’ve low humidity, mist them regularly when watering. This will also help prevent invasion of this beauty by Spider Mites.

During the growing season, every two weeks or so, they delight in being fed a well balanced liquid fertilizer meal (such as 10-10-10) that has been diluted by half. In fall and winter they lose their appetite a bit so feed them only monthly.





If you wish to propagate them, do so with either seeds or stem tip cuttings. The latter, as stem tip cuttings, preferably in the Spring. For best results, dip the cut end in a hormone rooting powder before inserting in moist potting mix. Then cover it with a plastic bag to raise the humidity around the cutting, keeping it warm and out of direct sunlight.

Plant these lacy leaved beauties against a light background – a white wall, for instance - for the most dramatic effect lent by their dark, lacy leaves as these will be, indeed, a delightful addition to your garden. But I do, rather vigorously, discourage the smoking of their leaves by that wild, Bohemian, hippy, wild-child cousin of yours when he comes to visit!



## Running the Grocery Gamut in Manzanillo

Suzanne A. Marshall

The grocery gamut (or perhaps for some the dreaded 'gauntlet') need not be as stressful or strange as one might anticipate if you are new to Manzanillo. You've finally decided to rent that condo for the winter or a month or two; perhaps you've completed that very complex and stressful real estate deal and, there you are in your winter home, suitcases filled with goodies for your new place and not a thing to eat in the kitchen. You think to yourself, I can't bear to get up in the morning without coffee! You've simply no choice but to venture out and foray your way into the beckoning unknown. But fear not, for it can be a fun adventure filled with unusual assortments of boxes, bottles, fruit and vegetables. If your 'Española' is limited, go with what you know by 'sight' for now and expand your pantry once you begin to absorb the environment, learn from friends and familiarize with the language.

**NEW ARRIVALS - GROCERY STORES** Your best bet is to head for the larger chain stores along the Boulevard de La Madrid. Not surprisingly you will find Wal-Mart, (it is amazingly the same as anywhere with a Mexican twist) Comercial Mexicana and Soriana. All of these stores will provide for all of your needs including household items such as appliances, dishes, cleaners etc. etc. Once you have your cart in the aisles, you will have no trouble finding, coffee, dairy, meats, baking, fruits and vegetables and yes alcoholic beverages. (Not seen in a grocery store in Canada though it is mucho convenient.)

This would be a good spot to talk about some extra precautions that will possibly make your life easier in Manzanillo as you consume local foods but at the same time potentially ingest some foreign bacteria that are not really harmful but your body is not familiar with. My personal digestive system has never liked changes which of course are unavoidable as we explore different places throughout the world. Your home kitchen is probably going to be a trouble-free dining experience if you take a little extra precaution.

In the Wal-Mart store (or perhaps the others) there is a bottled product called Microdyn and Bakers and Chefs Bactericida. We use either/or but now opt for the latter since it is available in a 1 liter bottle. Basically a dilution of this tincture will eliminate bacteria especially from products that you eat raw or don't cook thoroughly (I like crunchy steamed veggies). Be sure to get instructions



playa san pedrito mercado

with the packaging. Arriving home from food shopping, I fill the kitchen sink with cold tap water (the tap water in Manzanillo is good for cooking and steaming), and literally throw all my fruits and vegetables into the full sink with the specified amount of bactericida. I often need to do this twice as we buy so many things at once that I can't do them all. Having followed the timing instructions (10-15 minutes soaking) I remove them all and place them in my dish drainer to dry a little. Then I put them in clean containers or baskets etc. and keep them in the fridge and a counter fruit bowl. They are ready to eat. My home rule is: nothing goes in the fridge that hasn't been soaked. That way no one is confused and all is ready anytime. This product can also be dropped into drinking water and we even soak our market shrimp and fish as an extra caution. Other meats are fine as long as they are handled properly and well-cooked just as we would do at home.

**TOURIST MARKETS** – Many of us have learned that the tourist market along the main boulevard in the area of Santiago is a great place to meander and enjoy part of a Saturday in Manzanillo. Every week the vendors set up tents and booths on Friday night ready for the Saturday morning throng of tourists and locals who enjoy the bazaar or flea market atmosphere. This of course is far more than a fresh fruit and vegetable market and you will find clothing, jewelry, candy, fresh cookies and treats, CDs and videos, parts for appliances and tools, Mexican

souvenirs, purses, pottery, silver, paintings and so on. It is a great fun time complete with lunch if you feel like it and the vendors will graciously assist you with Spanish or speak to you in English as many are capable of. This is a very good place to practice your negotiating skills since you will find very little 'pricing' marked on products. Do beware of tourist pricing, but much of the product is quite inexpensive by North American standards.

**MEXICAN MARKETS** – I've always been a believer in going where the locals go, shopping where the locals shop and eating in restaurants that the locals enjoy. It is truly the way to really 'live' in Manzanillo and literally enjoy the local flavor. It's kind of like Chinese food. If it's going to be really good then the Chinese will be eating there too. Whoa! Some of you may say with great trepidation. Well I'm not saying tomorrow! What I am saying is keep an open mind to all the possibilities as you settle in, get more comfortable in your surroundings and learn the lay of the land so to speak. You will no doubt learn through referral where some of the best places to eat are found. If you're a cook, a foodie, someone who likes to evolve in the kitchen you are going to find yourself hankering for something beyond restaurants and big box grocery stores. (no insult intended). Furthermore, if you live on a budget which many do, this is going to be the way you find estimated savings of up to 25% over the grocery stores and as much as 50% from our home shopping in Canada. Though price is not everything, the extra pesos could make for another night out when you don't want to cook!

Where I come from in Canada, there is a phrase used about the '100 mile diet'. I'm not sure how wide-spread this is but it mostly means investing in your local producers and putting money back into supporting local smaller markets. This is how I feel about Manzanillo. If you want fresh, inexpensive locally grown food, you'll find it in the local markets and support the local people at the same time.

What I share with you now is not a comprehensive guide to local Mexican market shopping. It's my personal experience and of course will therefore only relate to where we have found local markets convenient to us (we live in the area of Salahua). I am certain that there are others in places further afield and out of our range so to speak.

**Santiago Market** – East of the main boulevard where the Saturday tourist market is found (Boulevard de la Madrid) about 3-4 blocks in, you will find the Santiago

Market. It forms a central square block filled within and outside with local vendors. There are meat shops, fish mongers, fruit and vegetable stands, mixed grocers, small eateries (like Lulu's- highly recommended), bakeries, clothing, shoes, sewing materials and so forth. It is a place that we have gone to regularly for years. You will find the pricing is lower and of course it's a beehive of activity on the weekend. The local farmers bring in their fresh goods and you won't see much if anything that has been shipped from other countries. It is such a wonderful thing for 'we' Canadians because in the winter season we rely so heavily upon imports from countries like Mexico and South America to provide us with raw fruits and vegetables. But frankly, nothing tastes as good as the real thing grown nearby and picked at ripeness instead of green for long-distance shipping.

We have eaten black berries as big as our thumbs, tasty shrimp, and a variety of fish and found a tiny tacoria down a side street where we buy purple sesame tacos to die for. Go and explore.



Mercado Cinco de Mayo

**Cinco de Mayo Market – El Centro** – It isn't a myth. It really exists. It's just a little tricky to find but really worth it. South of the main shoreline boulevard in El Centro (where the buses turn around) is a three story square block market of everything you could want for your refrigerator. At the back, if you drive a car you can head up the ramp and park on top of the building for 4 pesos and enter from the top floor. It's the usual concrete and brick structure and it is clean and cool for shopping. The third floor has places for eating and many little shops are neatly displayed as you work your way down the stairs to

the main floor and what I would call the main event. This is a relatively new discovery for us. We stumbled into it on one of our long walking explorations down in El Centro last year. We absolutely love it. We have purchased wonderful seafood, meat cuts for Chamorro and filleted chicken breasts pounded thin for fast frying. Vegetables and fruit line the aisles and we were very impressed with the cleanliness and order. It's also cool and comfortable given the brick walls and massive open interior. Though the bathrooms charge a few pesos (3), they are kept very clean and well stocked with paper. How fresh is fresh? As we sat on our Terrace recently, we saw some local fishermen pulling in the nets on our beach in front of the condo.

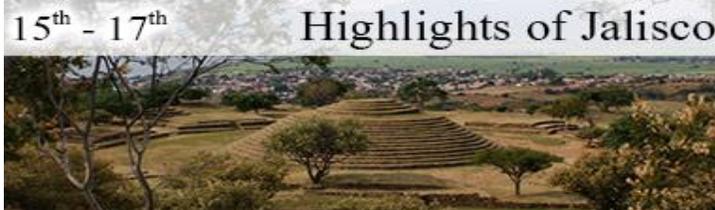


market within two hours. Now that is as fresh as it gets. It wasn't a big catch that day, but most of the fish were 2-3 pounders. You may have enjoyed one at your local restaurant! Today as I write this story, throngs of pelicans and their entourage of small birds are dive bombing the surf and I could actually see white fish forms as the waves rolled in near the shore.



It's hard to believe they all get in that little boat but they do. Sometimes as many as 12 men plus the fish net and their catch of the day! They all just stand up in the boat and away they go. Amazing. Since my husband Allan ran down to take these photos (all of them in this article) he inquired about where they would take the fish. The response was that these fish would be in the El Centro

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pelicans and their entourage of small birds are dive bombing the surf and I could actually see white fish forms as the waves rolled in near the shore.

Meet Jimmy (right ) one of the local fish mongers at El Centro. Jimmy works with a knife so sharp we stopped to count his fingers. He is a friendly man with a huge smile and very helpful with questions about seafood and fish and can complete a filleting in about 20 seconds. His English is very good and we ended up trying some different fish that day as we were able to get his opinion and assistance. He even demonstrated how to devein shrimp for our friends. Good fortune smiles upon us.

In the photo following Jimmy is a typical vegetable stand loaded with lovely fresh fruit, herbs and vegetables.

If you're planning on venturing out to enjoy the Cinco de Mayo market in El Centro, be sure to get good directions or use GPS and mapping programs if you have them. It's really not that difficult to find if you know what to look for. The density of the streets with all the shops and locals can throw you off a bit. It did with us the second



time we returned with a car to find it. So we drove in circles for a while. But once the landmarks are established you will no doubt want to return again and again.

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## Children's Christmas Parties

by Terry Sovil

### Mira Mar Children's Christmas Party

The first Children's Christmas Party of the season was held at Mira Mar in a kindergarten school. The location was easy to reach and proved to be an excellent venue for the party. The location is fenced, has many trees for shade and being elevated a bit was catching a nice breeze. The party was held on 23/December/2012 from 3 to 6pm.

The welcoming committee attached wrist bands to the children and these were removed at the end of the party as gifts were handed out. There was face painting for everyone and an inflatable Hacienda for the kids to jump around. A clown provided balloon animals and entertainment. A total of 350 wrist badges were given out. As the pizza was being served Santa Claus slipped away to get into uniform. The crowd was excited and waiting when he appeared and started handing out gifts to the children. The smiling faces, gracias and a few tears from frightened ninos relayed their thanks. Each child got a gift, a bag of candy and an orange topping off a great day at Mira Mar!





## Santiago Gran Posada Children's Christmas Party

This event was again held in Santiago. New this year was an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the number of bubble blowers and bubbles produced. A fire truck with a huge ladder came in to allow a videographer and photographer to get up above the crowd to document the bubble event. Results were all submitted and we will learn in a few weeks if a world record was established.

775 children were in attendance at this year's event. 200 smaller children enjoyed face painting and piñatas. The older children were inside the football area and they blew the bubbles and enjoyed two clowns and games. Pizza and flavored waters were served. There were volunteer bubble blowers who created some huge bubbles and huge quantities of bubbles to keep people entertained. After the pizza the children got to meet Santa in a special red and white sombrero each got a gift and a bag of candy. The community support was good and the children all left with big smiles and sincere thanks.



## What is a green flash?

Manzanillo sun reporter

Manzanillo is well known internationally for the green flash phenomenon during sunsets, as well as the warm waters of the ocean, deep sea fishing, port and tourism.

Well, what are green flashes?



**Green flashes** and **green rays** are optical phenomena that occur shortly after sunset or before sunrise, when a green spot is visible, usually for no more than a second or two, above the sun, or it may resemble a green ray shooting up from the sunset point. Green flashes are a group of phenomena stemming from different causes, and some are more common than others. Green flashes may be observed from any altitude (even from an aircraft). They usually are seen at an unobstructed horizon, such as over the ocean, but are possible over cloud tops and mountain tops as well.

A green flash also may be observed in association with the Moon and bright planets at the horizon, including Venus and Jupiter.

Green flashes are enhanced by mirage\*, which increase the density gradient in the atmosphere and therefore,

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increase refraction. A green flash is more likely to be seen in clear air, when more of the light from the setting sun reaches the observer without being scattered. One might expect to see a blue flash, but the blue is preferentially scattered out of the line of sight, and remaining light ends up looking green.

With slight magnification a green rim on the top of the solar disk may be seen on most clear-day sunsets, although the flash or ray effects require a stronger layering of the atmosphere and a mirage, which serves to magnify the green from a fraction of a second to a couple of seconds.

Very occasionally, the amount of blue light is sufficient to be visible as a "blue flash".

\*A **mirage of an astronomical object** is a naturally occurring optical phenomenon, in which light rays are bent to produce distorted or multiple images of an astronomical object.

Many times there are "sparkles" in the water at night, these are caused by phosphorus elements in the waters surrounding Manzanillo. People living on the Bay of Manzanillo can see these often on moonlit nights.



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**2013  
CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
MANZANILLO**

**JANUARY**

January 25 - Friday CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER AND AUCTION

Where: Gran Pavillion, Manzanillo  
Time: 5:30 pm – Silent auction  
7:00 pm – Dinner & program  
Cost: \$45.00USD  
Contact: Marge Tyler – [maggiet19@earthlink.net](mailto:maggiet19@earthlink.net)  
Janice Morgan – [janicebmorgan@comcast.net](mailto:janicebmorgan@comcast.net)  
Reservations for tables of 10 are available.

January 26 - Saturday CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE AND CHILD SPONSORSHIP DAY

Where: Casa Hogar Los Angelitos Home Facility, #16 Privado Pedro Flores, Salagua, Manzanillo  
Time: 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm  
Contact: Casa Hogar 334-0878 or [nysfeed@comcast.net](mailto:nysfeed@comcast.net)  
Meet the children and staff, tour the facilities, enjoy program presented by the children.

January 27 – Sunday 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LA MANZANILLA ART WALK / OPEN STUDIOS

Where: Artists' homes & studios in La Manzanilla, Jalisco  
Time: 10:00am to 4:00 pm  
Cost: Free  
Contact: June Nery 315-351-5685  
[june@VisitLaManzanilla.com](mailto:june@VisitLaManzanilla.com)

Tour takers will meet individual artists, have the opportunity to ask questions about their artistic process and purchase original works of art directly from the artists.

La Manzanilla is home to many talented artists whose work includes watercolors, acrylics, ceramics, photography, embroidery, hand-crafted jewelry and mixed media to name a few. Many artists' homes double as studios giving tour participants a chance to see some of the lovely area homes.

January 29 - Tuesday PATA POKER TOURNAMENT, SILENT AUCTION, ART SHOW

Where: Club Oasis  
Time: 7:00 pm – art show & silent auction  
Cost: Donations accepted for silent auction. Donation form available at [www.patamanzanillo.com](http://www.patamanzanillo.com)



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<b>MARILYN MONROE</b> Jugosita con champiñones, tocino y queso amarillo Juicy with mushrooms, american cheese and bacon	\$65
<b>JAMES DEAN</b> Carne bañada en salsa BBQ y queso blanco. With white cheese and our home made bbq sauce	\$60
<b>FRANK SINATRA</b> Combinación de salami y pimienta verde con queso blanco y aderezo ranch o blue cheese White cheese, salami, green peppers with ranch or blue cheese dressing.	\$70
<b>CANTINFLAS</b> Guacamole con tocino y queso blanco. Our mexican combination with guacamole, white cheese and bacon.	\$70
<b>BB. KING</b> Suprema con doble carne y queso. Supreme with double meat and cheese.	\$85
Ingrediente extra: \$5 Extra Ingredient: \$5	

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**FEBRUARY**

February 5-8 - Tuesday-Friday EFREN GONZALEZ OIL PAINTING WORKSHOP

Where: Las Brisas - exact location to follow later

Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm each of 4 days

Cost: \$3,800.00 pesos (all painting supplies included)

Contact: [brigitteyc@aol.com](mailto:brigitteyc@aol.com)

Space is limited. Reservations accepted immediately.

February 10 - |Sunday EFREN GONZALEZ ART EXHIBIT & DEMONSTATION

Where: Home of Candy King & Dan Allnoch, Las Brisas

Time: 5:00 - 7:30 pm

Cost: \$300 pesos

Contact: [brigitteyc@aol.com](mailto:brigitteyc@aol.com)

Space is limited. Reserve tickets at email address above. Cost includes 2 cocktails, appetizers & complimentary raffle ticket. Benefit for PATA.

February 12 - Tuesday SANTIAGO FOUNDATION 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY AUCTION & DINNER

Where: Tesoro Hotel

Time: 6:00 pm - Silent Auction  
7:00 pm - Dinner & Live Auction

February 24 - |Sunday VIDA ART SHOW

Where: Vida Del Mar

Time: 2:00 - 4:00 pm

12 artists painting, sculpture, ceramics

**MARCH**

March 7-11 - Friday to Tuesday 2013 MARCH PATA STERILIZATION CLINIC

Where: Casa Ejidal, Salagua (4 blocks NE of jardin)

Time: 8:00 am daily

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For further information -

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## SNIPPETS FROM ROUND AND ABOUT

Manzanillo Sun Reporter

### Christmas Trees

In Manzanillo we have noticed Christmas trees coming into the stores earlier and earlier. By the time Christmas arrives, the trees are dropping needles like crazy and totally dead. The trees are just coming to the right temperature for automatic combustion. Below is the report on this industry in a recent article in the newspapers.

US and Canadian Christmas trees have flooded into Mexico in recent years, along with increased North American trade in everything from avocados to artisan liquor. This holiday season alone, more than a million trees have been imported over the Rio Grande to decorate homes celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, Mexico's Environment Department reported.

The imports now outnumber the 700,000 trees provided by Mexican growers this year.

But not everyone sees the southward flow of pines as a welcome present. Some Mexican farmers and politicians complain they are fighting unfair competition from the wealthy subsidized US plantations. The issue even reached the Mexican Senate, which on Dec. 16 sent an official request to the Forest Department asking why more support has not been given to Mexican Christmas-tree growers.

### Avocados

Mexico is the world's largest producer of the Avocado. In fact, Mexico has 320,000 acres dedicated to harvesting the fruit. Nearly all of this acreage is in the state of Michoacan with Uruapan being the epicentre of production. It is the climate and minerals in the soil that help to make Mexican avocados the most abundant and arguably the tastiest. For this reason, most avocados consumed in the United States are from Mexico.

Mexican avocados are often bigger and juicier than US-grown avocados and are the most popular choice in much of the United States.

### Ornaments

The largest ever Angel Ornament was made in Mexico. It was made in January 2001 by Sergio Rodriguez in the town of Nuevo León. The angel was 18' 3" high and had wing span of 11' 9"! Perhaps the most amazing thing about the angel was that it was completely made out of old beer bottles, 2946 of them!

### New Year Mexican traditions

On New Year's Eve, women who want love and passion in the next year wear **red underwear**; for happiness and prosperity, yellow underwear; for health and well-being, green underwear; for true love and friendship, pink underwear; for hope and peace, white underwear.

An apple and a lime are placed at each entrance to the house and left until they start to implode; at which time they are buried. I find the sight of the apple and lime by each door rather amusing. Such mirth is not shared by Pablo, the other two-footed resident in the house so I generally end up throwing apple and lime out before the appointed time, perhaps ensuring the displeasure of whatever entity the placement of the fruit was designed to appease.

A peculiar habit of Mexicans is to celebrate the New Year by firing off a volley of shots into the air from any available firearm. The government has passed a law prohibiting this practice since what goes up, invariable comes down. However, each year there still are incidents of celebrants killed or injured by falling bullets, showing the practice has been curtailed but certainly not eliminated.



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## Avocado cheesecake with walnut crust



**Serves:** 10 people

### Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup shelled walnuts
- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed anise seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1 lemon
- 1 1/2 cups skim milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 fully ripened Avocados from Mexico, halved, pitted, peeled and diced
- 8 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened and cut in pieces
- 

### Instructions:

Heat oven to 350°F. In food processor, pulse walnuts until finely ground. Add graham cracker crumbs, 1 tablespoon sugar, anise seeds and salt; pulse just until combined. Add 2 tablespoons water; pulse until ingredients are thoroughly combined and resemble wet sand. Press into bottom of an 8 1/2-inch spring form pan. Bake 20 minutes; cool completely.

In measuring cup or small bowl, combine gelatin with 2 tablespoons water; let stand for 5 minutes. With vegetable peeler, remove strips of lemon zest (yellow

portion only). In saucepan, combine milk, 1/2 cup sugar, vanilla and lemon zest; bring to boil. Add gelatin; simmer until gelatin has completely dissolved, about 1 minute; strain and discard lemon zest. In food processor, combine avocados and cream cheese. Pour hot milk mixture into processor; process until very smooth. Pour into baked crust; cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours or until set. Remove side of pan; cut cheesecake into 10 slices. Serve with raspberry sauce, if desired. Cheesecake is best when served the same day; any leftover cheesecake should be securely covered with clear plastic wrap and refrigerated.

### Per serving:

242 calories; 8 g protein; 13 g fat; 26 g carbohydrates

### Comments

Recipe from <http://www.theamazingavocado.com/featured-recipes/avocado-cheesecake-with-walnut-crust/>



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## A Christmas Story

As Remembered By  
Kirby Vickery

It was the morning before Christmas and Santa Claus was blissfully dreaming of being able to rearrange the younger children's factory with the purchase of some new labor saving fabrication equipment. This was something he had intended on doing for several years but for one reason or another, had never gotten around to it. The sad part of his dream was the growing attitude of the elves who worked there. Actually, he almost felt that he was coerced into his decision by that group because they were starting to talk about worker's rights, unions and better conditions to include longer chocolate and cookie breaks as well as the use of those expensive power tools.

He was suddenly awakened by a pounding at his front door. When he sat up and opened his eyes he was surprised to find that the sun had already risen (I know as well as the next person that this doesn't happen at the North Pole in the middle of winter. But, then again, you will have to find me a pole up there to mark that spot to begin with. And remember, it's my story, so there!). Not only that, Mrs. Claus was still sacked out next to him with her sleep mask still tied firmly in place while snoring peacefully away.

He lightly slapped her on her rump as he jumped out of bed saying, "C'mon old girl. The alarm didn't go off and the sun is up. This is the busiest day of the year for me and we're already two hours late."

"Oh Nick," she replied sleepily. "We do this every year and I'm really tired of it. The closer we get to Christmas the more demanding you get. The more demanding you get the less fun it is to be around you and I told you last year that if it didn't stop happening, I'll just quit. Well, you've done it again and you think you have problems with the elves. Try this out for size! I quit! That's it! I'm done! Let me know when you get back in tonight as I don't think I'm even going to get up." And with that she turned over, raised a hand in a goodbye or dismissive gesture (he wasn't sure) and went back to sleep.

The getting dressed part was

hampered by the insistent hammering at the front door. So he threw on one of his special Santa ropes and went downstairs to answer the door. When he opened it and looked out he didn't see anyone or anything other than noticing that it had started to snow again.

Then he heard a very tiny voice. "Down here, Mr. Santa. Down here." So he glanced down to see his lead elf standing in about five inches of snow with a long scroll held out and pointing at him. At first Santa thought that it was a revised demand for toys list which always showed up at this time of year and he reached for it while inviting the elf in for some coffee he was going to make.

The lead elf had a larger than usual frown on his face as he whipped the scroll out of Santa's reach saying, "Oh no ya' don't Mr. Santa. Our lawyer said that I had to read this to you before I handed it over in front of witnesses to make it all legal like." With that the elf barged in brushing by Santa with about half a dozen or so elves following. All, save one, wearing dark frowns on their faces.

The exception was a fairly young elf that Santa recognized as being a brand new worker in his shop. This lad had probably never been in the big house before and as a result his eyes got real big and his head started bobbing in every direction while his mouth hung open trying to take everything in. He did this so much that a couple of other elves had to corral him and guide him back into the entry way.



directly across from Juanitos



The lead elf brought the scroll out in front of him and let the bottom drop to the floor. It reminded Santa of a town crier from a by-gone era. When he pulled himself up to his full three and half feet and assumed an air of importance and authority, Santa almost lost it.

Santa wasn't really in the mood nor did he want to take the time to listen to all the 'whereas' and 'therefores.' He stood there listening until the elf came to the part, "... that as of this minute we are on strike and have contracted with the UEWA (United Elves Worker's Association) to become a union shop."

They were not going to let any outside, non-unionized, elves cross their picket line. Santa glanced outside in the direction of the toy shops and saw that the picket lines complete with signs, bull horns, and some larger elves standing to one side were already in place. They had miniature lengths of plastic pipe and whiffle bats in their hands. Santa didn't recognize any of those elves but noticed that they all were very ugly and had candy cigarettes hanging from the corners of their mouths.

He didn't really hear all that was said but accepted the scroll which was handed over with exaggerated dignity. The elves all piled out and the only one that looked up was the young one who also gave a shy wave of his hand which Santa returned.

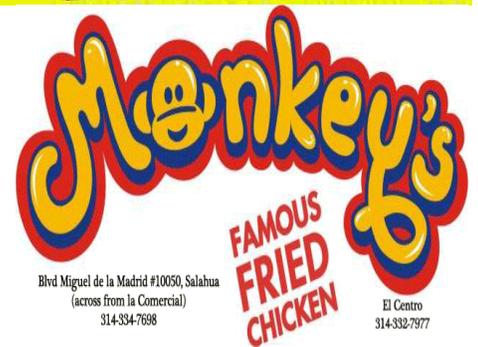
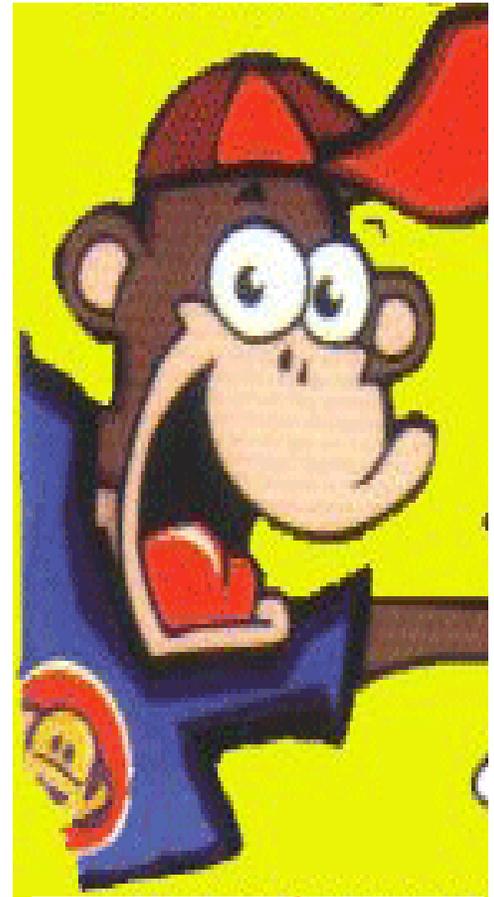
At this point, Santa really missed his wife.

Here he was embarking on the longest day of the year for him and he didn't know how to cook. Try as he must he couldn't get a rise out of her by calling (yelling) up the staircase. So into the kitchen he went. He spent

a great deal of time looking for the stuff he needed for breakfast. Normally Mrs. Claus would also pack him a few sandwiches and a thermos or two to keep warm on this his busiest night. However, he spent so much time looking for the things he needed for breakfast, he had decided that he would forgo his traveling food.

At the end of breakfast there was a frustrated Santa Claus. The coffee he made was pure mud and then he discovered he hadn't made enough to go into his thermos too. His breakfast turned out to be two strips of charcoal which had originated as a pair of nicely thick cut apple smoked bacon. His eggs turned out to be a couple of cellophane puddles with yellowish orange colored centers that wouldn't cut but wanted to roll across the floor when he missed the trash can. Normally he was more coordinated than he was displaying this morning but the spoon standing straight up in his coffee cup threw his aim off just when he was trying to toss the eggs away. He gave up on breakfast and started to mutter to himself in a low voice again which was totally non-intelligible.

He went back up stairs to get dressed but couldn't find his clean clothing. But here he got a small break. He ended up yelling at Mrs. Claus and she would gesture toward one place or another as to where everything was. He was able to find clean clothing for everything except for his coat. The only one he could find had Alfredo sauce spilled all over it from the other night when they were entertaining the mayor of Santa's Village. The Mayor had stopped by to tell him that his taxes just had to go up for the survival of the village and its support structure such as garbage pick-up, street maintenance, snow removal, and Christmas decorations. So dawning the stained jacket he made his way out to the workshops.



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It was a little disconcerting to find them empty and he noticed that his mumblings were coming a little more often and were just a little louder. He was a magic elf after all and was able to finish all the toys slated for delivery that night and much to his surprise he had a little extra time. So he wondered over to the reindeer only to find that Rudolph had a very bad cold and was coughing, sneezing and running a fever. With Rudolph's nose inoperative Santa would be flying blind tonight.

He checked his sleigh-mounted RADAR unit to find that the elves had pulled the fuses so it was out too. His grumblings became even louder and occurred even more often. When he checked his sleigh he found the elves had pulled the runner from one side to repair the split in it when he had accidentally hit the Golden Gate Bridge last year. The problem was, they hadn't finished the repairs because of the excess transportation costs in shipping the new one. Oh it had come in but, there again, because of the strike, there it stood all ready to be installed leaning up against the wall in a corner of the sleigh barn.

Santa's mumbling got still louder and some of the words would have offended some of the lady elves as well as some of the younger ones. They, of course, were not in the barn so that they could have heard these ramblings. Santa not only re-fitted the runner himself but was able to locate all the elves that were not on the picket line.

He found them having a Christmas party in their common room right in the middle of their quarters. It was a party to end all Christmas parties complete with canapés and exotic snacks and good party booze from all over the world. He attempted to go in but was stopped by the unknown and

strange elves. They were firm but insistent and he stopped trying when they started to reach in under their cute little elfin jackets right in the area where there were large lumps under them.

Santa noted the time and went out to get all the reindeer to get them hooked to his newly repaired sleigh. He was only stepped on three times by the nervous beasts. He knew they weren't entirely keen on using the GPS for the night but he hadn't any choice. He finished hooking them up and loaded all the toys, games, and other presents onto the sleigh. He had slipped while putting one bag in. That caused him to bark a shin rather hard.

Muttering even louder with clearly understandable words which even the elder elves would never use when they smashed their own digits with hammers while making the children's toys, he limped back into the great house. He decided that he would try to make some sandwiches for his journey.



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He had burnt the toast, dropped and broken a bottle of mayo and chopped on two fingers while cutting the corned beef and the Port de Salud cheese. He was in the process of cleaning the cuts when he discovered he had no idea where the bandages were. This elf was no longer muttering anything. He was involved in a long and loud monolog of every nasty word he could think of in the two hundred and thirty five languages that he spoke fluently. The paint in the kitchen over the sink was starting to peel when the door bell went off again. Still ranting and leaving a trail of blood with an assortment of bandaging material he made his way, limping, to the door and just threw it open.

Again he couldn't see anything or anybody as before but looked down still muttering to himself while trying to stem the flow of blood issuing from his fingers. There he saw a little cherub. She was such a little thing with a overlarge, fat, tummy, rosy cheeks, red full lips, a button nose and clothed in a pastel blue sash which announced to the world that she was a 'Novice Angel.' It went over her left shoulder down to her right hip. She was very shy and had one hand up in front of her chin with the tip of a forefinger in her mouth. The other hand was holding the top part of a large but very full pine tree. It was already partially decorated with some blinking electric lights, a few glass bulbs of which two were broken along with several branches. This tree had seen some rough travel times to get it where it was.

The little cherub batted her big, blue eyes at the hot, steaming, Santa Claus and said in a very high but very sweet little voice. "Mr. Santa Claus, I know its three weeks late and there's a delivery fee. But, where would you like me to stick this tree?"



## Tips for Managing Your Finances in Retirement

Living in retirement isn't always life at the beach, even in Manzanillo or Puerto Vallarta; it requires an understanding of key financial issues and careful planning, as well as a close, positive relationship with your financial advisor.

For a stress-free retirement, here are three of the most common mistakes that people make, along with suggested strategies for avoiding them.

### Mistake #1- Spending too much too early

- Periodically re-evaluate your budget to ensure it is still realistic.
- Determine how much you need to put aside to sustain your budget throughout your retirement.
- If your savings do not match up, gradually pay down debt and increase annual savings.

### Mistake #2 - Not knowing the consequences of taking distributions

- Don't withdraw funds without knowing the rules governing withdrawals.
- Decide whether you can put off taking distributions until you reach age 70<sup>½</sup>, so your money can continue to grow tax-deferred.
  - Plan your distribution payouts according to your life expectancy. Withdraw as much as you need for living expenses while keeping the bulk of your assets working for you.
  - Withdraw first from savings and taxable investment accounts; only then turn to tax-advantaged accounts.
  - When you do tap tax-advantaged accounts, know the consequences.
  - Consider opening a Roth IRA. You can also roll over amounts in a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, if certain conditions are satisfied.

### Mistake #3 - Not knowing how and when to grow your assets

- If you need your assets to grow over 10 years or more, consider putting the majority in stocks (and remember to take your heirs into that time consideration).
- If you require current income, consider investing the majority of your assets in bonds, preferred equity and/or convertible.
- If you seek stability of principal and don't need to grow your assets, consider putting the majority of your portfolio in cash equivalents.

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](mailto:Yannk@AtlantisWealth.com), in Mexico: (314) 333-1295 or in the US: (321) 574-1529.





## Reflections of the Past Year

*Freda Rumford*

It is not usual for reporters to become the lead in the story they are writing. Unfortunately for you, dear reader, my eyes have turned so far inward these days that at the moment there is no way out but through my pen.

My parents were children of the Victorian era, very straight and honest who ruled with a rod of iron. Certainly they would not fit into the theories of Dr. Spock. Neither did I for that matter. I find that the modern-agers are lacking generally in the respect previously shown to elders and find the statement "you have to earn respect" rather rude and grandiose. Haven't those of my era done just that by providing for; housing, clothing and educating children to a point where they can take their place in the world? Very few of us had nannies or maids as children and eventually, with our own families, played all of the servant roles in turn as needed. We tried at the same time to make a bit of a life for ourselves along the way; sometimes very successfully and enjoyable, in other instances not. Besides rearing our families, we of the "Silent Generation" were the first generation that had both parents in the work force merely to make ends meet.

Having done all of the above with some degree of success, it has finally come to the slowing down stage and I am in my December days. Having found respect in both business and pleasurable pursuits; having been told by so many that I am a very strong and thoughtful person, it astonishes me find that I am now deemed to be totally inadequate in determining the life choices I wish to make. It's surprising to find that after having coached my children and occasional friends through some traumatic circumstances, I am considered totally inept in making my own decisions and character analyses.

I grew up in England in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and was treated to all of the modern inventions not known of by my grandparents but dreamed of by George Orwell, Jules Verne, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury. We didn't have a refrigerator, a television, or a washing machine when I was growing up but we did have a radio, a local library, a big back garden and very vivid imaginations. My grandchildren have all grown up with all of the above plus very fast thumbs!!



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Two years ago I was widowed after a very long and reasonably successful marriage. My heels were swept from under me and I tried desperately to find my feet. My family and friends were there for me every step of the way, cheering me on in every little triumph and small step that I made. It was a hard journey but I had the right companions. Having had a lifelong lover, I most certainly did not expect to meet somebody new who would want to step up to walk beside me for the rest of my life. But that has happened and I am most fortunate in finding someone who is so compatible, who likes me so well that he wants to be with me for the rest of the time we have on this earth. We laugh at and with each other constantly; enjoy playing; working; planning and learning about each other



every day. We have each been introduced to new likes in food; authors and experiences; plus found a willing helpmate or ear when the road gets a little rough.

This past year has been possibly one of the most eventful of a very eventful life. I sit here now in my La-Z-boy chair in Abbotsford, B.C. watching the snow drift softly down on a lawn still completely covered with autumn leaves. This is the first time that I have seen snow in fifteen years as we made definite moves then to run away from winter in Calgary, Alberta. We lived in Calgary for almost 35 years before deciding that now we were retired it was not required to live with sub-zero temperatures, icy roads and freezing rain any more.

I have had a major health set back recently but did that deter my new love? Not a bit of it! I had a constant visitor at the hospital and a personal chef and masseur upon my return home. A cup of tea at the ready should I fade and an aid in standing straight in the shower to wash my lank hospital head.

Never in my wildest dream would I have considered that a septuagenarian, even a somewhat crazy one, could possibly find someone to love and be loved by so late in life. Am I of the age to be put out on the shelf just to be dusted off for company? I don't think so because I am not yet old and do not intend to become so any time soon. I have enjoyed a long life that shows no sign of slowing down or letting up in momentum.

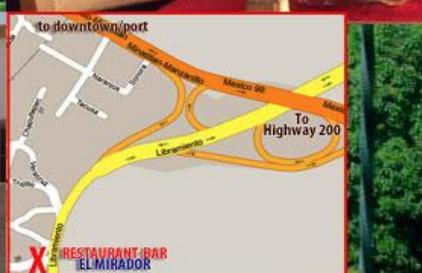
A variety of people seem to question my sanity! But truthfully, is it better to be lonely and merely remember days gone by, or to spend time with a like soul of the things which are to come and yet to be experienced? Who would have the temerity to think they know better than I what is needed for my next quarter or more century? I am still working on that myself and there is so much to learn and do.

Next year will be a wonderful year.

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### Healthy Living Habits that Anyone Can Follow!

A friend gave me a plate of delicious Christmas cookies and a jar of Rum Balls and was so surprised when I was eager to eat them. Most people assume that because I exercise and eat healthy that I would turn down cookies. Not so fast- it's because I take care of myself that I can indulge now and then and not feel guilty! Everyone thinks if they want to live healthier that they will only eat twigs and tree bark and generally have no fun at all. This is certainly not true and it is much easier to make a few changes now than have to make radical changes when you have a major medical problem.

Dieting to lose weight for a wedding or other special event is not the ticket to longevity. Eating a healthy diet to add quality years to your life is the key. Exercising every now and then will not keep you fit, it needs to be a daily commitment to move more and push yourself harder than you think you can. It's not easy but it certainly is worth it. With all the discussions about the cost and availability of health care it just makes sense to treat your body well in order to avoid so many medical issues that are lifestyle related.

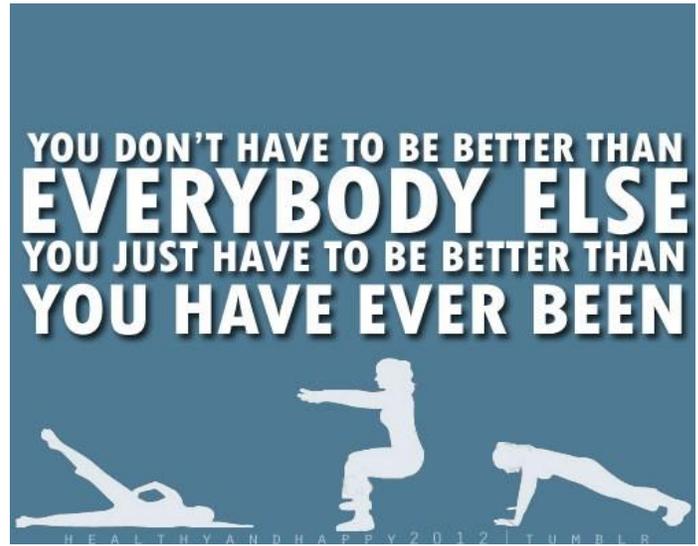
Here are a few habits that will change your life: (thanks to SkinnyMs. for the ideas)

- 1- **Eat for Longevity.** What you eat is what your body uses to heal, grow, and to fight off infections. Essentially, what you eat can either get you one step closer to health, or one step away from vitality and a longer life. Would you want to choose a meal packed with nutrients, or one that packs on pounds and makes you feel sluggish? Don't let your schedule or previous bad habits make the choice. This doesn't mean you can never enjoy a hamburger again, just think of it as a treat that you enjoy on special occasions.



- 2- **Avoid Eating Anything That isn't Nutritious.** Keeping disciplined eating habits means that your brain needs to make choices on your body's behalf. Don't allow emotional triggers, or a lack of time to lead you astray. Just follow this one simple rule: Don't put anything in your mouth that doesn't nourish your body. Before you quit reading...go to the next tip.
- 3- **Eat Cheat Foods.** Denying yourself of sweets, filling foods and the foods you love will only make your relationship with food a battle. Give yourself one day a week or one time-period of the day when you allow yourself to eat whatever you want, even if it's a Whopper. What you will find is that these foods become less appealing as you develop a healthier relationship with foods that are good for you, and you will crave them less. I know it sounds odd but it is true. Another tip- do 15 jumping jacks before grabbing a treat. Many times I still grab the treat but at least I burned a calorie or two on the way to the cookie jar!
- 4- **Exercise Every Day.** Workouts should not feel like a death sentence. If they do, you are not exercising enough or you are doing the wrong exercise. If you don't like running, don't run. Do you like dancing? Then dance. Find something you enjoy and do it on a regular basis. Just 15 minutes a day not only burns calories, it also releases

important brain chemicals and hormones that improve your mood. Raising your heart rate for 15 minutes a day improves oxygenation in your body further nourishing all body systems. Don't obsess over weight loss, or muscle tone – just shoot for healthy habits, and healthy thoughts and you will get there. Once you make exercise a part of your daily routine you will find you look forward to it and might even want more!



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## Our Twisted Way of Speaking - X

By: Tommy Clarkson

(I claim no authorship of most of the following but when it was recently forwarded to me I realized that it fits, most perfectly, in this series!)

There's no egg in eggplant, no ham in hamburger, neither apple nor pine in pineapple, English muffins weren't invented in England, nor do French fries come from France. Sweetmeats are candies, sweetbreads aren't sweet nor meat. Quicksand works slowly, boxing rings are square, and guinea pigs are neither from Guinea nor pigs.

Writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce, and hammers don't ham. If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, two geese. One moose, two meese? One index, two indices?

You can make amends but not an amend? If you get rid of all your odds and ends save one, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? People recite at plays and play at recitals, ship by car and send cargo by ship, and have noses that run but feet that smell.

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? Your house can burn up as it burns down, you fill in a form by filling it out, and alarms go off by going on. When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

How can inflammable and flammable mean the same thing? And when a car slows up, it slows down!

Now let us proceed to a variant of these burning "word worries"! These writings are also by another and may be seen on the web site "Confusing Words". Some of these words simply befuddle (that this is, simply, a fun word!) us. Examples are affect and effect; capital and capitol; affluent and effluent; atheist and agnostic; lay or lie; and, perhaps even, there, their and they're.

OK. You got all of those correctly, right? You knew the proper definition and when/how to use them! Well, as noted on the "Confusing Words" site, what are the differences between - and how would you use - all together

vs. altogether? Already vs. all ready? Compliment vs. complement? Every day vs. everyday? Good vs. well? Neither vs. nor? Sooth vs. soothe? A lot vs. allot? Then there are others we sometimes used wrong like allusion and illusion; breath and breathe; cite or site; elicit or illicit; eminent or imminent; loose and lose; stationery or stationary; then or than; accede or exceed; intrastate or interstate.

Then we've one of the commonest of incorrect usages in our twisted language: its as opposed to it's!

And working overtime - or is that over time I came to realize - there's the old semantic question of "to teach" as opposed "to train". While we teach our children and train our pets, why is it that repeatedly I heard, while in uniform, we were "training our troops" . . . though, in the vernacular of WWII, "dogfaces" we may have been?

For a great test on such as the afore described, go to <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/quiz/usage.htm>

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Santiago has a new addition to the business scene, The Coffee Bean. This is a new coffee shop that will look familiar and comforting to ex-Pats as well as locals. Open daily they serve up coffee made from beans grown in Chiapas. Way down on the southern border of Mexico is Guatemala's Huehuetenango area where great coffees are grown. These beans share some similarities because of the closeness.

They have a selection of treats and meals for breakfast and lunches. I've tried the pumpkin role, cinnamon rolls, carrot cake, chocolate cake and a waffle. I've gotten a close look at the bagel breakfast sandwich and it looks delicious. There are sandwiches as well. They brew all of the standard fare (lattes, cappuccinos, house blend) plus smoothies.

They have a large meeting room setup in the back and that room is available to local groups for meetings. They have a large screen, projector and can even provide a computer and technical support to get your meeting off to a great start. One unique option is their ability, and willingness, to help your group set up a fundraiser.

An example might be a local school that wants to buy a couple of computers. They can print up some flyers, distribute them and tell supporters to visit The Coffee Bean on a specific day during specific hours. While they are enjoying the coffee and food they know that a percentage of the proceeds will go directly to their school for computers. This is a really unique and great approach for local groups that benefits everyone.

If you are looking for the Coffee Bean it is just to the right of Juanito's parking area. If you were across the street looking at Juanito's they are located just to the right. Plan a visit soon and you'll have a wonderful time. Lee and his wife are here from Texas running a great place so make them welcome to Manzanillo!





## Gaucha's Restaurant-Bar

There is a new Argentino restaurant in Las Brisas called Gaucho's Restaurant Bar. Reviews that came to me about the quality were all very favorable. I ventured out with friends to try this new location and we were all very pleased with the food and service.

Gaucha's on the main boulevard, across the street from Sinayuca, one of my favorite little spots, with the old Coco Loco on the street directly behind and closer to the beach. Their formal address is Ave. Lazaro Cardenas #1316 and their phone number is 314-33-6586. The owner, Jose Luis Daye and his wife Milagro are there. Jose speaks English. Their hours are currently 6pm-1am or later depending on the business.

They have an extensive menu that includes empanadas, picaditas, carne, pastas, tortas, lomitos, hamburgers, milanesas, pizzas, desserts and drinks.

After a close study of the multi-paged menu we all decided to try the Parilla (Sampler) Platter for 4 at a cost of \$480.00 pesos. There was plenty of good to feed all four of us. The meal included many cuts of meats and vegetables that were brought with a flame burning over the bowl. The taste was a subtle rum flavor, not overwhelming, and very good. The meal started with empanadas, included in the price for the sampler. I tried the chicken empanada and it was delicious. Then came the huge platter of meats. I had a Corona at 20 pesos. The desserts looked wonderful but we all passed being full from the huge platter of meats. Gaucho's is well worth a visit. Excellent food at a very agreeable price!



Viva Argentina! *Terry Sovil*