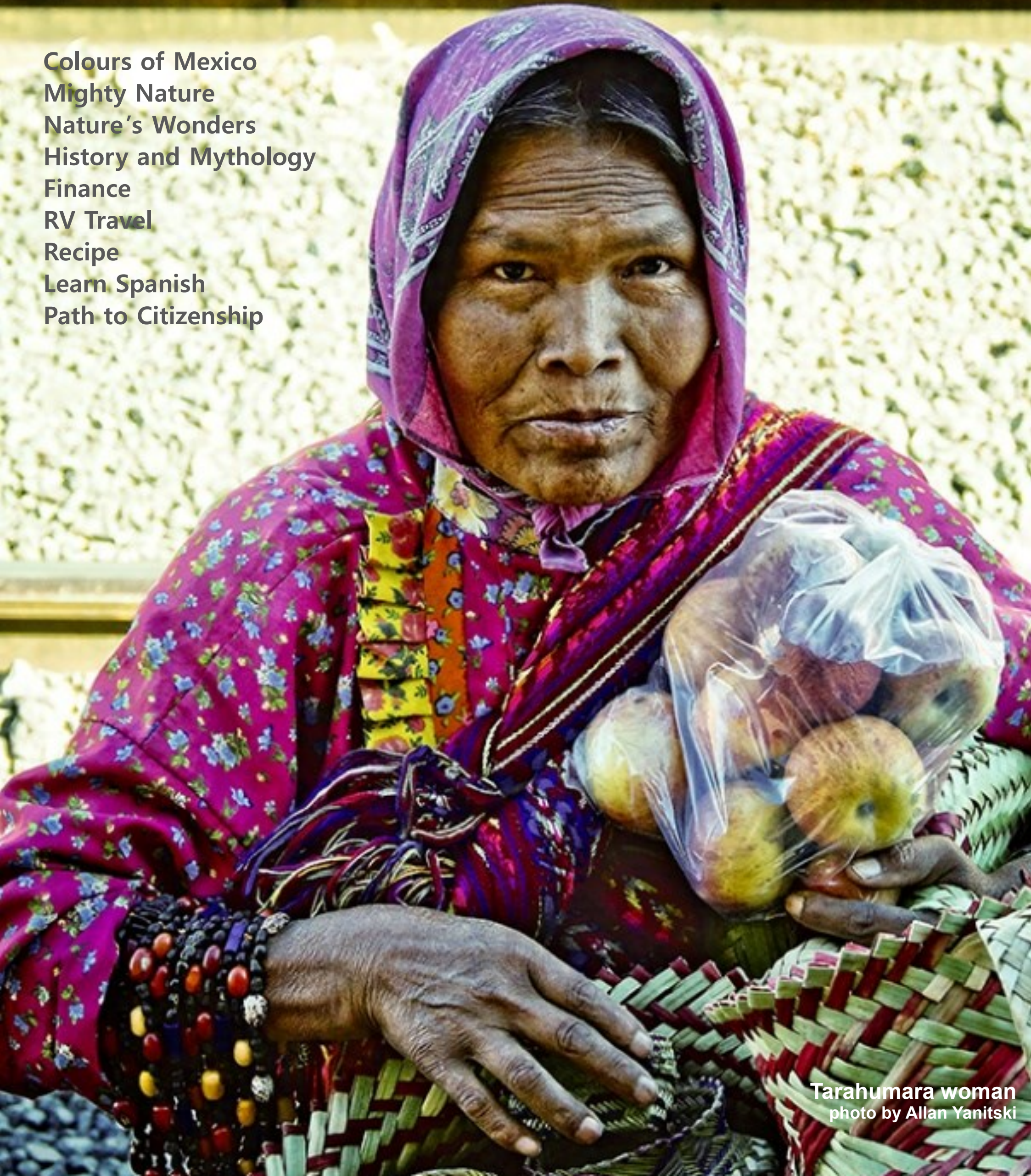




- Colours of Mexico
- Mighty Nature
- Nature's Wonders
- History and Mythology
- Finance
- RV Travel
- Recipe
- Learn Spanish
- Path to Citizenship



Tarahumara woman
photo by Allan Yanitski

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Article submissions:

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

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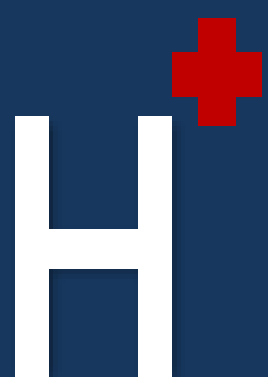


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The Great Copper Canyon

by Suzanne A. Marshall

BARRANCA DEL COBRE

Having trudged through our wardrobes and revived our 'cooler' climate clothing and exchanged our flip-flops for walking shoes; we packed our bags and headed out to explore yet another 'must see' Mexican spectacle, the great Copper Canyon and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Having friends joining us to share the adventure, we looked forward to eight days of exploration and sight-seeing and another experience into the unknown which I am about to share.

Located in the north-easterly area of the Sierra Madres and the southwestern part of the state of Chihuahua, Copper Canyon is a network of six distinct canyons, each with its own valley river which later all merge into the Rio Fuerte. As a singular unit, the canyon is 4-7 times bigger than its American counterpart, the Grand Canyon. The depth of the canyons, in particular the Urique Canyon, is well over 6000 feet and it is said that there are areas as deep as 8000 feet.

But it is different from the unique sandstone and granite display of the Grand Canyon. The Copper Canyon is largely greenish and a patchwork of arid topography. The rim is alpine with trees such as pine and oak, while the valleys are subtropical and much warmer. There is often a display of cactus among the huge granite boulders and valley pines and grasses.

Our itinerary began with a bus ride from Manzanillo aboard one of Mexico's first-class bus lines (foot rest, adjustable seats, television, wifi, sandwich and drinks, etc.). Our booking took us



Copper Canyon is vast and deep with both alpine and sub-tropic climates

directly to a stop at the Guadalajara airport. This gave us enough time to find our way around, check our luggage and board a flight destined for Los Mochis, Sinaloa. Here we stayed overnight at the Hotel Plaza Inn. A pleasant, clean and totally acceptable lodging. I should add here that it came as quite a surprise to discover that the airport terminal at Los Mochis is well out of town and it is necessary to arrange a taxi for a connection into the city.

At the hotel, we arranged for ground transportation for the next day to take us to our first tour stop, El Fuerte. Here we checked into a magnificent converted mansion, the Hotel Torres del Fuerte. This was a delightful stay with interior gardens and dining areas, magnificent plants and foliage with lovely grounds to tour and enjoy. And enjoy we did. We ventured out into the streets and explored the shops and parks and ultimately ate dinner at a wonderful cathedral style restaurant with delicious food and great service.



Hotel Torres del Fuerte, El Fuerte, Sinaloa with interior open garden lobby



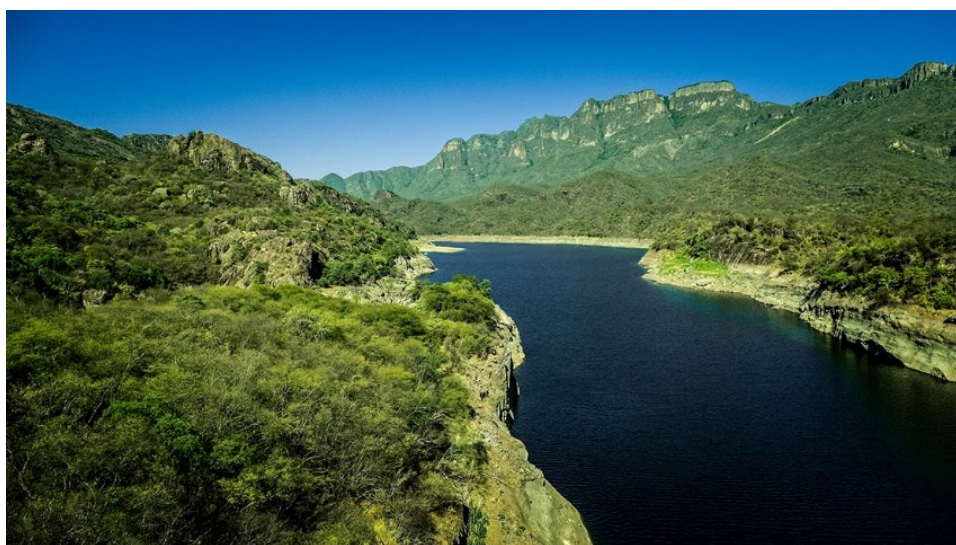
Our bedroom at the Hotel del Fuerte

...The Great Copper Canyon

Early the next morning, we boarded the famous El Chepe Train (Chihuahua Pacific Railway) and our canyon tour commenced. The train and its rail line are feats of engineering, considering the 418 miles (673km) through the canyons. The tracks pass over 37 bridges and through 86 tunnels, rising as high as 7,900 ft. above sea level. Its construction began about 1900 but, with financial difficulties given the challenges of the rugged terrain, the railroad was not completed until 1961.



El Chepe, The Chihuahua Pacific Railway



El Chepe traverses 37 bridges and 86 tunnels through the canyon

We weren't sure what to expect when we boarded the train, but we ended up quite delighted with the large windows and comfortable seats for sitting and viewing the magnificent vistas that we passed by continuously. The train provided a dining car complete with menus and tasty food and drink.

For a few hours, we sat back and just absorbed as much as we could and took many photos until we arrived at Bahuichivo at noon and hopped into one of the waiting taxi vans that took us to our next overnight stay at the Hotel Mision Cerocahui a short distance away. Here we had almost a full day to explore

the area until our next departure that would take us to Divisadero and our next touring stop.

Meanwhile, we enjoyed our rustic surroundings. Our hotel rooms were equipped with wood burning stoves and plenty of firewood. The rooms were laid out in separate buildings facing a small courtyard. All were connected to the main lodge and dining room. Given that it was November, we definitely made good use of the warmer clothing we had brought, though it was pleasantly warm during the daytime. At night we stoked the fires and were comfortable and cozy.



A woman of the Tarahumara Indian tribe sells fresh apples and woven baskets at the train station

La Mision is indeed a small mission where there is a beautiful cathedral and a special school for girls aged 5 and up. The objective is to keep them safe, give them an education and there-

...The Great Copper Canyon

fore a better prospect for a meaningful life. Too often these young girls fall prey to abuse and the local farm families will travel miles to place them in the schools and to visit them whenever they can on weekends. We toured these places and saw the girls in their colorful skirts and scarfs playing like typical healthy young children. They have their own dormitories and are well fed. It was a real eye opener for us given the lives we all take for granted back in the US and Canada.

A short distance from the school and the mission there is also a vineyard which is producing some quite nice wines. This was initially considered a challenge given the elevation and climate. But it has succeeded and brings needed revenue for the people and the operations



A quaint bar in the Hotel Mision lodge

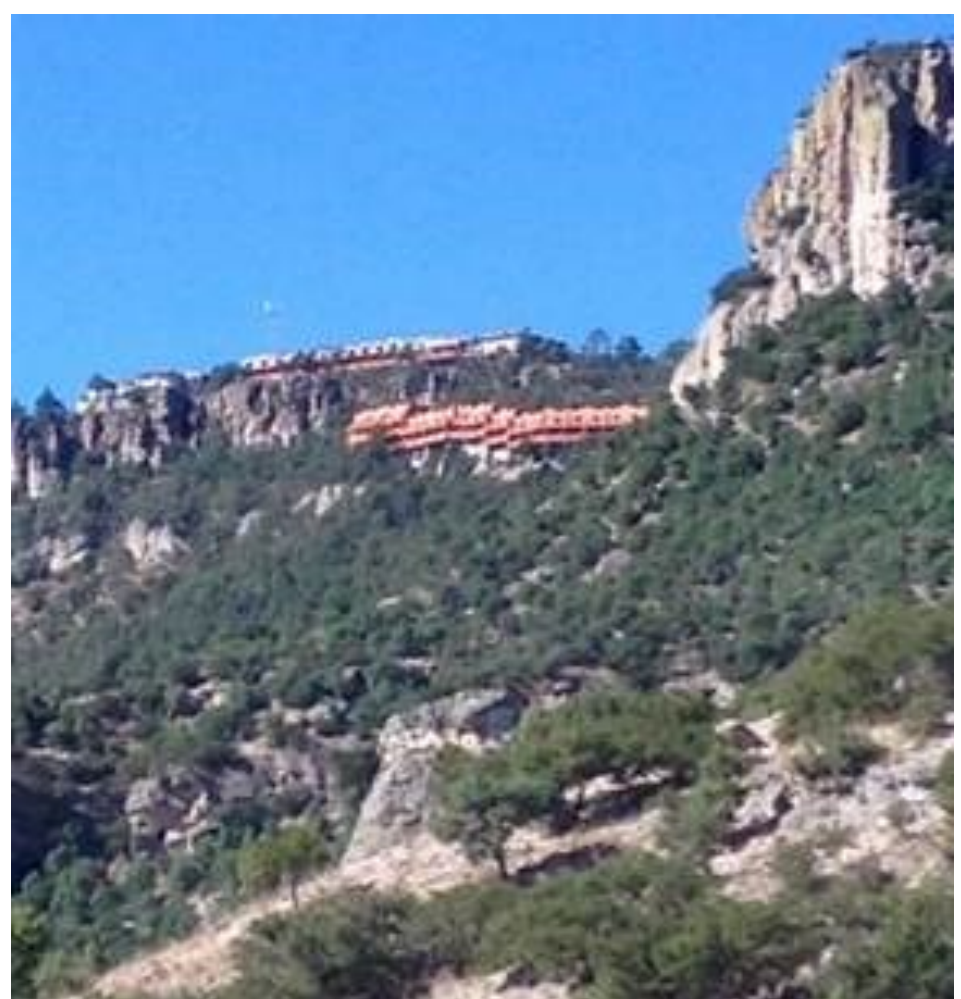
The next morning following a big breakfast and a tour of the winery, we were back at the train station awaiting our next leg of the trip on El Chepe. This short jaunt was just two hours from Divisadero where we checked into our next hotel, the Posada Barrancas Mirador. And from this location it seemed as though the earth disappeared beneath us. What a stunning spectacle.

Perched on the edge of the canyon just a short distance from Divisadero, the Hotel Mirador couldn't possibly offer more splendid views of the Copper Canyon. Rooms and balconies are jutting out over the vista complete with a small balcony with table and chairs to sit and contemplate the magnificence. The dining room has, of course, windows from ceiling to floor and you can step outside from there to gaze while enjoying a drink or some coffee. The rooms also had fireplaces but were equipped with wall heaters that were in use during our stay.



The Posada Barrancas Mirador hotel offers some of the world's greatest views.

Our friends, who are early risers, said the sunrise over the canyon was fabulous and we'll have to take their word on that one. I have no doubts about it. There are trails that can be navigated down below the hotel among the trees and along various levels below. One must beware of the need to ascend back up from below. A bit of a task for the unfit.



Hotel Posada Barrancas Mirador can be seen clinging to the upper lip of the Copper Canyon

...The Great Copper Canyon



A long balcony for guests is accessible off the dining room at the Mirador

So, I didn't venture too far down as I knew our next day's agenda included a cable car ride down into the floor of the canyon and that there was also a zip line facility which my husband intended to try. It was not for this 'chica', however. I stood ready with my iPhone to capture a video of the event. We were told that this was the longest zip line in the world (at least at the time).

I had no trouble believing it since my husband literally disappeared from view as he descended to the bottom of the canyon. I kept on videoing until there was nothing to see. The rest of us hopped onto the cable car and joined him at the bottom. (Beware the 40-minute climb back up from the zip line landing to the cable car platform if no one mentions it.)

During this visit, we were able to cross a foot bridge to Divisadero and shop the local markets and artisans' fair. This is always a nice way to grab a piece of local art for a souvenir. I found a hand-made wooden violin with bow, gaily painted and quite unique to place in our condo wall when we returned.

With two fantastic days under our belts, we hopped on El Chepe again for a short hour's ride to Creel where we checked in at the Best Western Hotel. And when I say western I mean the most western type of hotel I've ever seen. Complete with antler candelabra, huge stone fireplace and wooden beam structures everywhere, it was a delightful surprise.

We were each given a rustic cabin with all the amenities and were delighted to find ourselves in the heart of the city where we could walk about the shops and absorb the flavor of our surroundings. A delightful dining room awaited us in the large hotel lodge lobby later and we enjoyed an amazing Mexican dinner.



The lobby of the Best Western Hotel, Creel, Chihuahua

...The Great Copper Canyon

Creel is on a large plain in the state of Chihuahua, surrounded by nearby hills, forests and lakes. I later realized that we could have stayed a few days longer in Creel to see more of the sites. But, that would have to wait for another time as we were booked on El Chepe and moving on to the city of Chihuahua after our 1½ day stay and our eventual flight back home.

Nevertheless, the following morning we arranged for a local van tour and were taken sight-seeing on a tour that revealed some very unusual sites. For one, we visited a spot where some local Tarahumara (also known as Rarámuri) cave dwelling native people lived. They were very gracious, and I understand that they exist through raising animal stock, selling crafts and some amount of farming.

The Tarahumara peoples speak their own language and are famed for their distance running prowess. Over the centuries, they have been running between various villages and mountain trails and have been known to run all day long since they are so physically adept to this activity. The women and children dress in remarkably colorful skirts and tops which all have many tiny pleats. These, of course, are all hand sewn and part of their tradition. It is said that the Tarahumara population is somewhere between 35,000 and 70,000 people. (Our guide told us that he was a Tarahumara himself but decided to learn Spanish and assume an easier lifestyle.)



A Tarahumara woman sells her crafts near the roadside



A pristine lake near Creel was an opportunity for a lovely shore walk

Also, in the Creel area, there are several waterfalls and hot springs which are hidden away in the back country. These are only available by hiking, horseback or guided treks with burros. Our guide did take us to see some interesting rock formations such as 'elephant rock' and to a lovely lake where we could walk the shoreline and enjoy the views and fresh air. It was a wonderful and memorable day.

This might be the point where many tourists of the area would take one of the returning trips on El Chepe and wind their way back to their starting point. We however, decided since the city of Chihuahua was the final point for El Chepe, why not see the city and a couple of well-known spots.

So the next day we headed out and jumped on El Chepe for one last time. This would be the final leg of our trip. We anticipated the city of Chihuahua and visits to the University Cultural Centre Quinta Gameros and The Museum of Francisco 'Pancho' Villa.

The city of Chihuahua was more attractive than I expected. It was open and clean and laid out in a huge valley that climbed the hills in the distance. The population of Chihuahua city is over 800,000. We checked into our rooms at the Hampton Inn and found ourselves a taxi outside to take us to the Pancho Villa museum first. It turns out to be a lovely house (or mansion), constructed around 1905, complete with beautiful garden areas and chock full of interesting information about this notorious man.

Villa was once the governor of Chihuahua. He was also a general in the Mexican revolution and eventually led a group of guerrillas and became involved in many battles and skirmishes

...The Great Copper Canyon

including robbery and murder. But his heart was with the people and he fought for many of them. We were unable to take photos inside the rooms of the museum but suffice it to say it's worthy of a visit to view all the salvaged photos and artifacts associated with his life and times.

Pancho Villa was assassinated in a hail of bullets in his 1919 Dodge Roadster as he and three others were taking a drive. He was just 45 years old. He had a reputation as a generous benefactor to many commoners and was hailed as a hero by many. The museum was extremely interesting.



The four amigos standing in front of Pancho Villas' famous roadster wherein he and his bodyguards were assassinated in a hail of bullets. We could see the bullet holes all over the vehicle.

Within a short walking distance of the Pancho Villa museum is the University Quinta Gameros Cultural Museum. It is a Historic National Monument of Mexico. The mansion was built for Manuel Gameros Ronquillo, a member of the Porfirian elite. It was constructed and completed between 1907 and 1910, just as the Mexican Revolution was commencing. The Gameros family fled to the USA and the mansion assumed many iterations between ownership and its final purpose as a cultural center in 1961.

The architectural style is Art Nouveau and includes details of Rococo, Beaux-Arts and Second Empire architecture. It was truly entrancing especially as we slowly explored the interior rooms and the unbelievable Art Nouveau furniture from the Requena Furniture Collection. Everywhere one casts their eyes was a feast of design and application.

Wall murals, cornices, Tiffany stained glass, statues and elaborate furnishings left me stunned. So much for today's 'use and toss' furnishings. These will endure forever in my mind (though

not always comfortable-looking). I had images of powdered wigs, bustled skirts and men's tail coats and leggings, though this was a time when the world was tipping into a much more modern era and the industrial revolution. The photos in this article demonstrate my meaning. If you visit Chihuahua city, it is a 'must see'.



The fabulous Chihuahua Quinta Gameros Cultural Museum

And so, with this most unusual and unexpected tour of the Quinta Gameros Cultural Museum our list of activities was complete. We returned to our hotel for rest and dinner and prepared ourselves to head out to the airport the following day and board our flight back to Guadalajara and ultimately our bus ride home to Manzanillo.

I think, if we had had the time, we might have considered riding El Chepe all the way back to Los Mochis again, but we hadn't planned for that and it was time to go home. To anyone considering the Great Copper Canyon tour, I would easily advise that it is a must see. You will not be disappointed with a good plan and plenty of time for exploration. You may even want to try that zip line.

(Author's Note: Given the length of this article, I will summarize the contributions regarding photos as contributions from – Suzanne Marshall, Allan J. Yanitski and free stock footage via Google where/when we were unable to take photos or wanted specific representation for the story.)

... more pics follow

...The Great Copper Canyon



Large 'picture' windows and comfy chairs allow for enjoying the magnificent scenery



One of 37 bridges crossed by El Chepe



A lovely cathedral offers services for all the local residents and children, near Hotel Mision



Hotel Mision offers a cozy dining room with a large field stone fireplace provided for guests



The cathedral can be seen in the distance from the small hotel courtyard garden at the Mision Hotel



Each room at Hotel Mision has a wood burning stove with wood to keep guests cozy at night

...The Great Copper Canyon



The young girls at the mission school play happily between classes



Hotel Mision provides inviting benches for guests to sit and relax outside their rooms



The vineyard at Mision has produced some very good wines which can be sampled in the hotel



One never tires of the grandeur of Copper Canyon



A cable car can be taken near the Mirador hotel at an installation by the town of Divisadero



All guest facilities at the Mirador are situated to offer magnificent canyon views



The Mirador offers rustic lounging areas and a bar for the guests to enjoy

...The Great Copper Canyon



The stunning view from the balconies of each room at the Mirador



Just outside the Mirador hotel is a suspended footbridge offering a shortcut to shopping and artisans in Divisadero



The platform of the world's longest zip line near Divisadero and the Hotel Mirador. Two people are ready to fly!

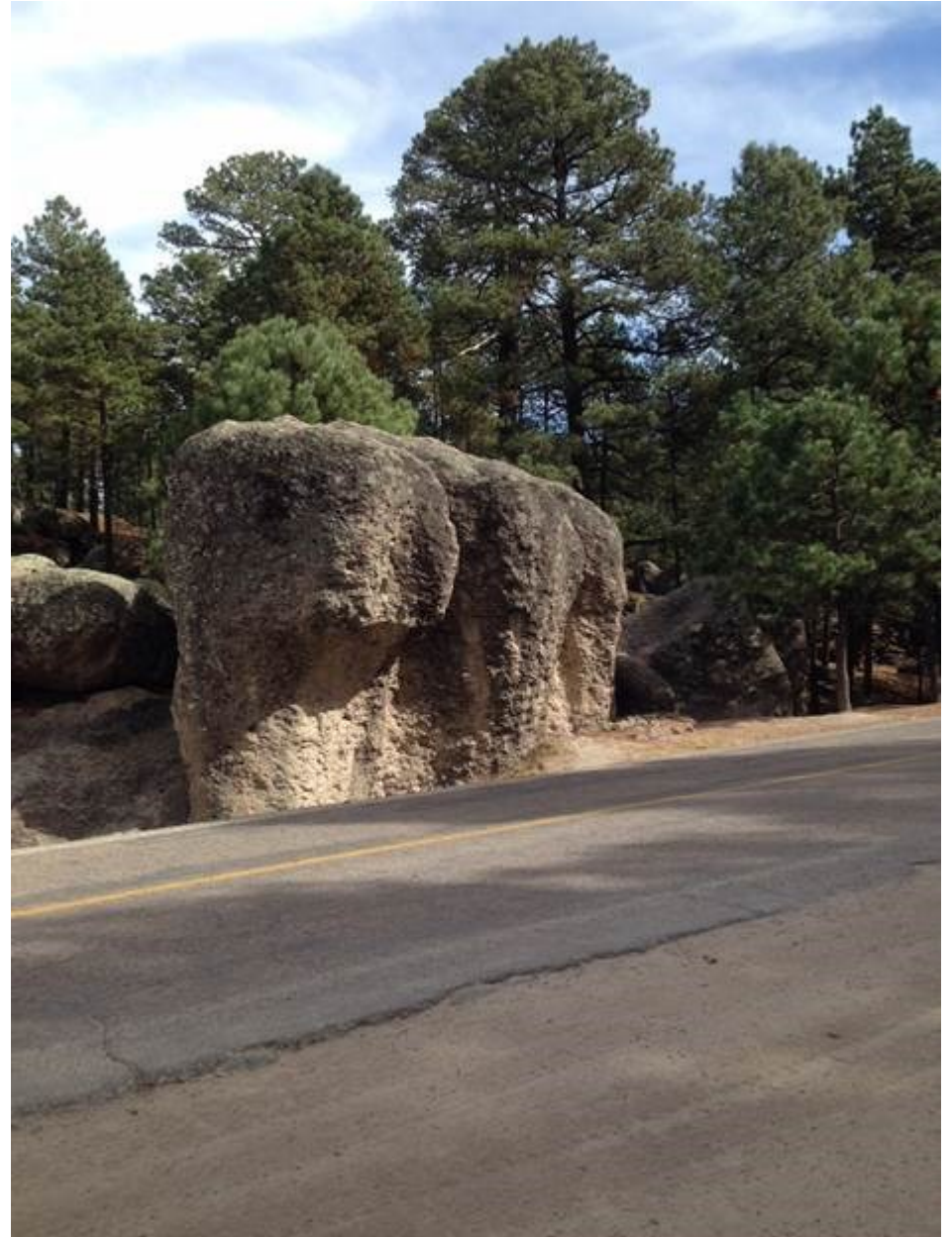


Rock formations as seen from the cable car

...The Great Copper Canyon



A beautiful, young Tarahumara girl helps the women sell their crafts near Creel



Elephant Rock near Creel and one of our day trip sites



The interior of this Tarahumara Cave reveals a mix of ancient life and more modern conveniences near Creel



There is a large cave near Creel that serves as a Tarahumara home just behind this narrow entrance and below the massive rocks. There were sleeping and cooking areas as well as furniture inside. It was larger than I expected.

...The Great Copper Canyon



One of a few photos allowed at the Pancho Villa museum was this lovely orange tree in an interior courtyard



Pancho Villa museum interior complete with hand-painted depictions of the life and times of this hero



Pancho Villa's 1919 Dodge Roadster



Wall mural of Pancho Villa on horseback

...The Great Copper Canyon



An elaborate bedroom in the Quinta Gameros Museum



Detailed cornices, statues and wall applications are to be seen everywhere in the Quinta Gameros Museum



A single bed with a wood carved peacock beside a prayer shrine in a bedroom



More peacock influenced wood carving designs can be seen on this wardrobe and side table



The Art Nouveau carved furnishings and ceiling applications are stunning

...The Great Copper Canyon



An ornately carved dining room featuring walls with wood relief and intricate designs



The ornate Art Nouveau furnishings, ceilings and walls of this visitor's salon are astonishing



A view from the second floor revealing fabulous cornices, skylights and appliques



Tiffany stained glass windows and sky lights brighten the enormous double staircase

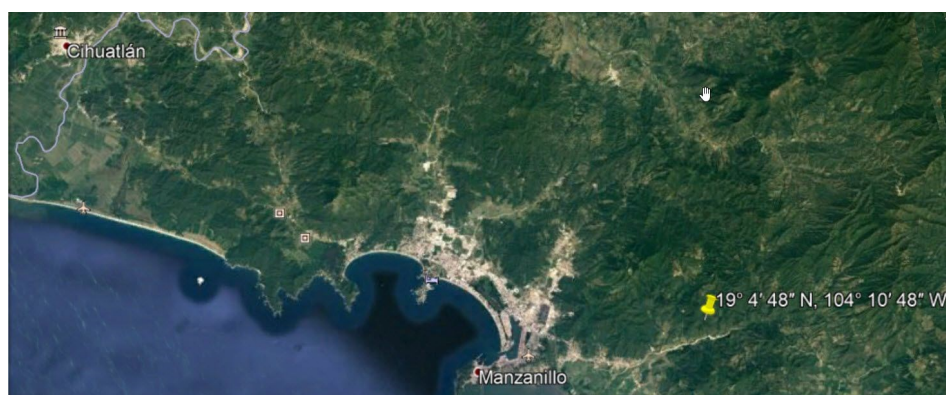
you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at suzanne@manzanillosun.com

Terremoto in Manzanillo

by Terry Sovil

On Monday, October 9, 1995 at 9:38AM a huge earthquake struck Cihuatlán-Manzanillo. It was an 8 on the moment magnitude scale or 7.6 on the Richter scale. It was on shore, at a depth of 40km / 25 miles, with a Mercalli intensity of "severe" (7), lasting about a minute. It was felt in Mexico City and in some high rise buildings in Dallas and Houston, Texas. The earthquake is notable for directing damage northwestward from the epicenter, up the Pacific coastline, while sparing the epicentral region and the area down the coastline.

The earthquake was in the area of the Rivera Plate beneath the North American Plate, caused by movements between the North American Plate, the Rivera Plate and the Cocos Plate. Near the epicenter, about 17,000 structures were damaged or collapsed, affecting about 45,000 people. Most affected was the Cihuatlán area, with 90% of the buildings damaged and 20% of them destroyed. Manzanillo, the bigger city, saw only about 5% of the structures damaged but enough to significantly affect the local economy.



Main shock area



The Mercalli intensity scale is a newer measurement from Italy for intensity of the quake. It is a scale of earthquake intensity ranging from I for an earthquake detected only by seismographs to XII for one causing total destruction of all buildings. The moment magnitude scale is one of many seismic magnitude scales used to measure the size of earthquakes. The scale was developed in the 1970s to succeed the 1930s-era Richter magnitude scale.

The aftershocks were in a rectangular region about 170 km x 70 km / 106 x 43 miles. The main shock area was about 24km south of Manzanillo and the aftershock area 20 km offshore of Manzanillo. The Jalisco State government reported that the hotel Costa Grande, a large tourist hotel in San Patricio Melaque, had also collapsed. They reported 11 people dead but later revised the report to hotel damage with no loss of life.

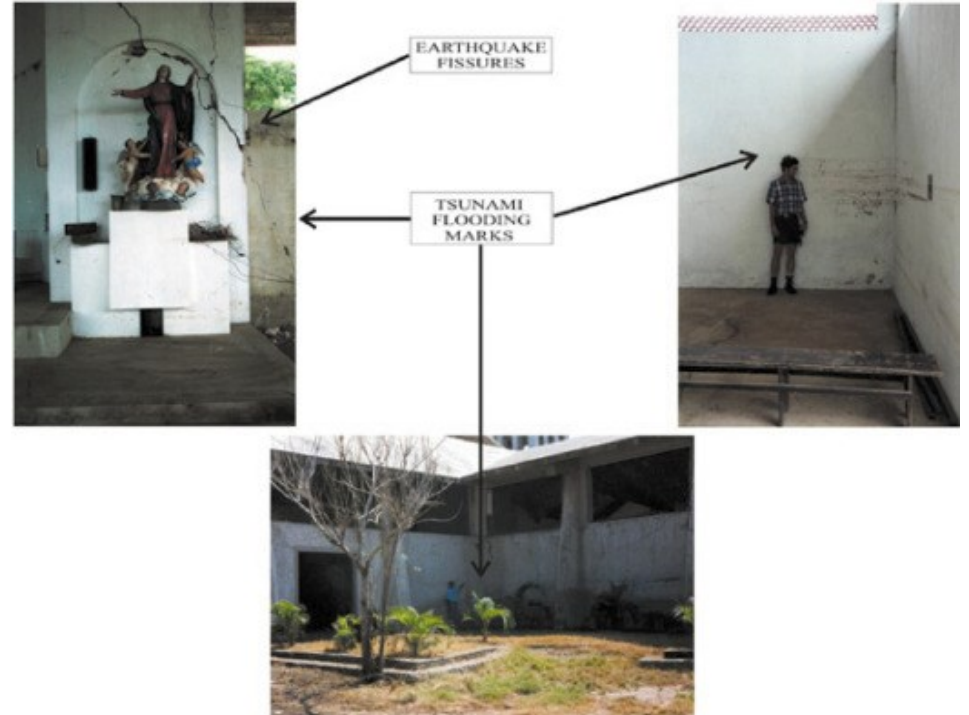
It was a shallow interplate thrust earthquake. An interplate earthquake occurs at the boundary between two tectonic plates. Interplate earthquakes associated at a subduction boundary are called megathrust earthquakes, the most powerful earthquakes.

Eighteen people died in the collapse of an eight-story hotel, the Costa Real, a beach-front hotel in Manzanillo. Some 50 people were inside and the navy and rescue crews searched with cranes. In newspaper reports, Michael Farley, an American who was on his yacht in the Manzanillo harbor, watched the Hotel Costa Real "crumble right before my eyes," he said. He was interviewed over short wave radio and telephone.

In Mexico City, it was reported that the 63-story glass and steel headquarters of Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex), the state-owned oil monopoly, swayed terrifyingly by a yard or more. At least 49 people died and 100 were injured in the city of Manzanillo and about 10 in the affected area of Jalisco. Initially, it was thought that as many as 57 died, but later the results were cut back.

Farley said "Everybody was yelling and pointing at the hotel. It looked like one of those films on TV, where the guys come in with dynamite and destroy the building. We watched it collapse into a pile of dust."

...Terremoto in Manzanillo



Temple in La Manzanilla

Mr. Farley noted that water in the bay fell 10 feet / 3 meters during the quake and came screaming back in a huge wave. In Jalisco, at least 10 people were killed and about 90 seriously injured according to a Mr. Naveja, the Jalisco spokesman. Nine of the deaths came in Cihuatlán and another person died in the nearby town of Mascota. Most were killed by collapsing homes. He estimate that some 900 homes collapsed.

Landslides blocked the highways between Melaque and Cihuatlán. Two bridges, spanning the Seco and Jualuco Rivers in Jalisco, collapsed, according to radio reports. Landslides blocked roads between Guadalajara and Manzanillo.

Probably one of the most visible earthquake examples is the old hospital that was declared unsafe and sits right next to the new Home Depot.



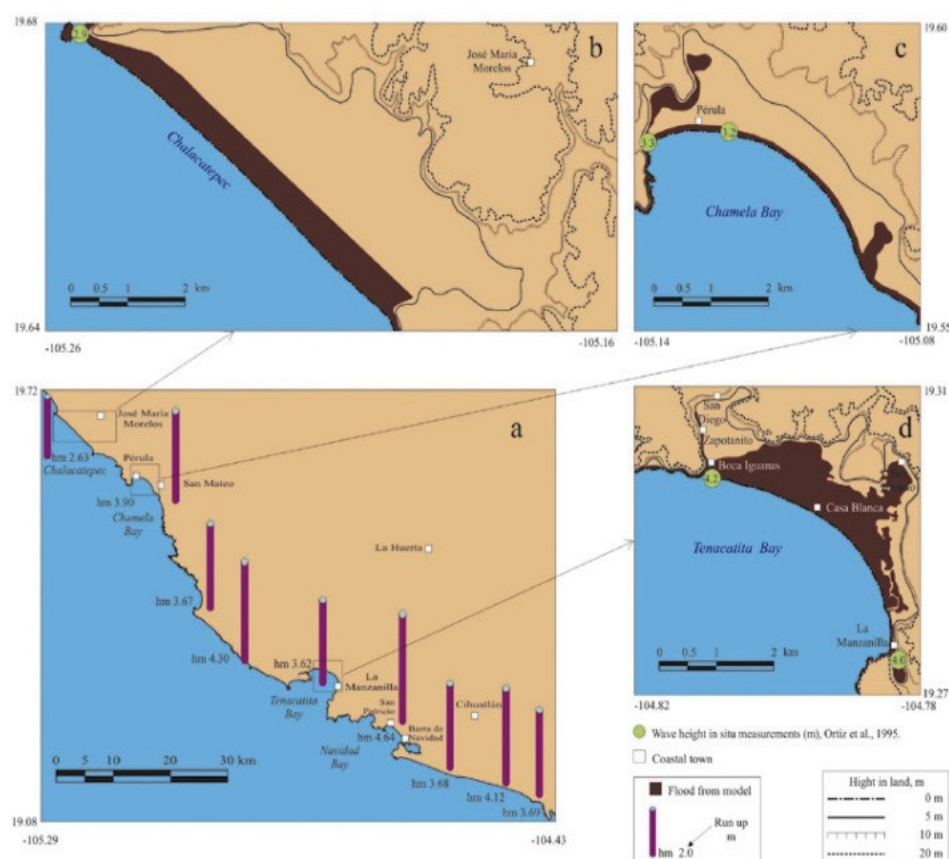
IMSS hospital

The tsunami (tidal wave) affected a 200 km / 124 miles stretch of coast. Most damage was in shallow shoreline areas. Flooding was in the Tenacatita Bay area. The wave had a maximum wave height of 5.1 meters / 16 ½ feet. At least 2 waves were recorded and it was also observed in parts of Ecuador, French Polynesia, Samoan Islands, Australia and Hawaii. Local citizens described the waves that hit the coast. Their testimonies were collected and the extent of the run-up were documented. There was a field survey done by Ortiz in 1995 and some corrections were made to the data.

The highest tsunami run-up was observed in Tenacatita Bay in the towns of La Manzanilla and Boca de Iguanas. The photo shows the flooding marks both inside and outside of the Temple of La Manzanilla.

There are videos, below, of the damages and the rescue efforts. Links:

- [20 años después](#) (video, 2:53)
- [Manzanillo earthquake update](#) (video, 4:04)



Tsunami map

you can reach Terry Sovil at terry@manzanillosun.com



by Tommy Clarkson

Ghost Plant *Graptopetalum paraguayense*

Family: *Crassulaceae*

Also known as: *Ghost Flower* or *Mother of Pearl Plant*

(After delving deeply into, and - all but rabidly - rooting through, my little library of botanical books, I thought I'd finally identified this attractive succulent as a member of the *Crassulaceae* family (*the Jade Plant clan*) and was wondering if it was in the *echeverias* genus (which I learned later, looks very much like these). My pal, Dr. Mark Olsen of the Institute of Biology at the University of Mexico, cautioned me saying that "this family is fiendishly complicated in Mexico".

So warned, I searched further, zeroing in on my target plant, suspecting, with more than a modicum of assuredness, that it might be a Pinwheel Aeonium, (*Aeonium haworthii*). Well, while not a bull's eye, direct botanical identification hit, in Army parlance, I was hand grenade close. I only missed the specific species name and its genus . . . well, *let's make that 155 mm artillery round close!*)

Graptopetalums, as a genus, are chameleonesque. If grown in partial shade, they are whitish-blue. However, if their home is under a full, hot sun, they tend to take on a pinkish-gray to yellow coloration. This species may have derived its name from that grayish white pallor its pudgy, opalescent leaves can sport. In actuality, this is caused by a powdery coating - called pruinose - that covers its leaves. This is what provides much of the "ghostly" appearance.



You may choose to allow it to become "leggy" so that its twisting stems can climb out of the pot and cascade down and around.

But don't let their name fool you. Ghost Plants are survivors. They're hardy, easy to grow, capable of sustaining themselves for protracted periods without water, scoffing at mere damaged stems, handling temperatures below freezing and they even ignore name-calling and bullying! (An answer to the former is that their thick leaves hold excess moisture in order to withstand protracted periods without rain. *As to the latter, it has a very strong spirit and confidence, no self-doubt whatsoever and a good positive image of itself!*) By the way, don't let their Latin name misdirect your botanical origin thoughts - they're native to Mexico, not Paraguay.

While most all of them will grow to be one foot (30.48 cm) tall and around two to three feet (60.96 - 91.44 cm) wide, each is very proud of its own, personal, self-identity and enjoys opportunities to be unique. Because of differences in sun exposure, quality of soil and amount of water, it is not uncommon for *Graptopetalums* specimens to look like entirely different plant species - even when growing but a few feet from each other. Attractive, four inch (10.16 cm) rosettes grow at the tips of their ever-lengthening stems.

With time, these will become pendant. (*Aha! A good cascading candidate for a hanging pot!*) But, keep in mind that their old leaves wither and fall off with new growth only, coming from

...Ghost Plant



An attractive rosette, comprised of overlapping, rounded triangles tips each stem.

the center of each rosette. This can lead to a somewhat awkward-appearing, denuded, long stem with an attractive rosette, comprised of overlapping, rounded triangles at the end. Hey, worry not, you can simply clip it off or, as branches of virtually all *Graptopetalums* detach readily, simply snap one off and start a new specimen elsewhere! In line with that, leaves and cuttings also root effortlessly. (This all is called vegetative reproduction, by the way.)

Some gardeners like to keep their ghost plant trimmed in order to maintain a fuller shape. But, for the sake of attaining a different - but intriguingly attractive - look, I might suggest that you allow it become "leggy" so that its twisting stems climb out of the pot and cascade down and around. And don't think that these interesting plants are not without their flora. Around spring, you may look forward to dainty sprays of star-shaped

white to yellow flowers. (I've also read in some commercial, botanical venues of pink or red flowers, but have not seen such.) In the right garden setting, *Graptopetalums* can be effectively employed as groundcover. But, like all their not so touchy-feely, succulent relations, they - similar to the early colonists - actively assert, "Don't tread on me!"



They're hardy, easy to grow, capable of sustaining themselves for protracted periods without water.

As to where they prefer to plant their roots, the soil should be sandy and dry with a medium amount of moisture. They are wonderful in rock, succulent or Mediterranean gardens but, while disease free, watch for mealy bugs, vine weevils and aphids.

I have seen nurseries describe the Ghost Plant as a "tender, soft succulent." Ya' know, there are a lot worse things to be said of one!

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Minor Gods and Aztec Demons

by Kirby Vickery

I have found the Aztec people to have been very intelligent and industrious to take over the Mixtec world through tribal consolidation, then concur as they did, although their empire was built on existing platforms previously established by the Mayan and Olmec.

Because of their priest class' absolute rule and demands made of them by their gods, the Aztecs had developed a quest for the reason why everything that was - was. Their pantheon of gods gave reason for everything in their world. Not only in the physical, but well into the abstract worlds of feeling, emotion, and perception of beauty and grace as well into the darker sides of things such as illness, darkness, and death.

Most people interested in Aztec mythology are aware of most of these gods that all played major roles in the Aztec five worlds of creation. To this list, the Aztec had many others, to include a whole group of minor deities, one of whom I'll talk about later. At the far end of this line of mythological beings where a bunch of demons. Here are a few:

THE AHUIZOTL

The Ahuizotl is an otter-like cryptid from Mexico. The Ahuizotl is described as a dog-sized otter that has a human-like hand on its tail.

The Ahuizotl hides underwater in the lake of Texcoco. It sticks the hand on the back of its tail out of the water and makes a sound similar to that of a crying baby which draws a person to

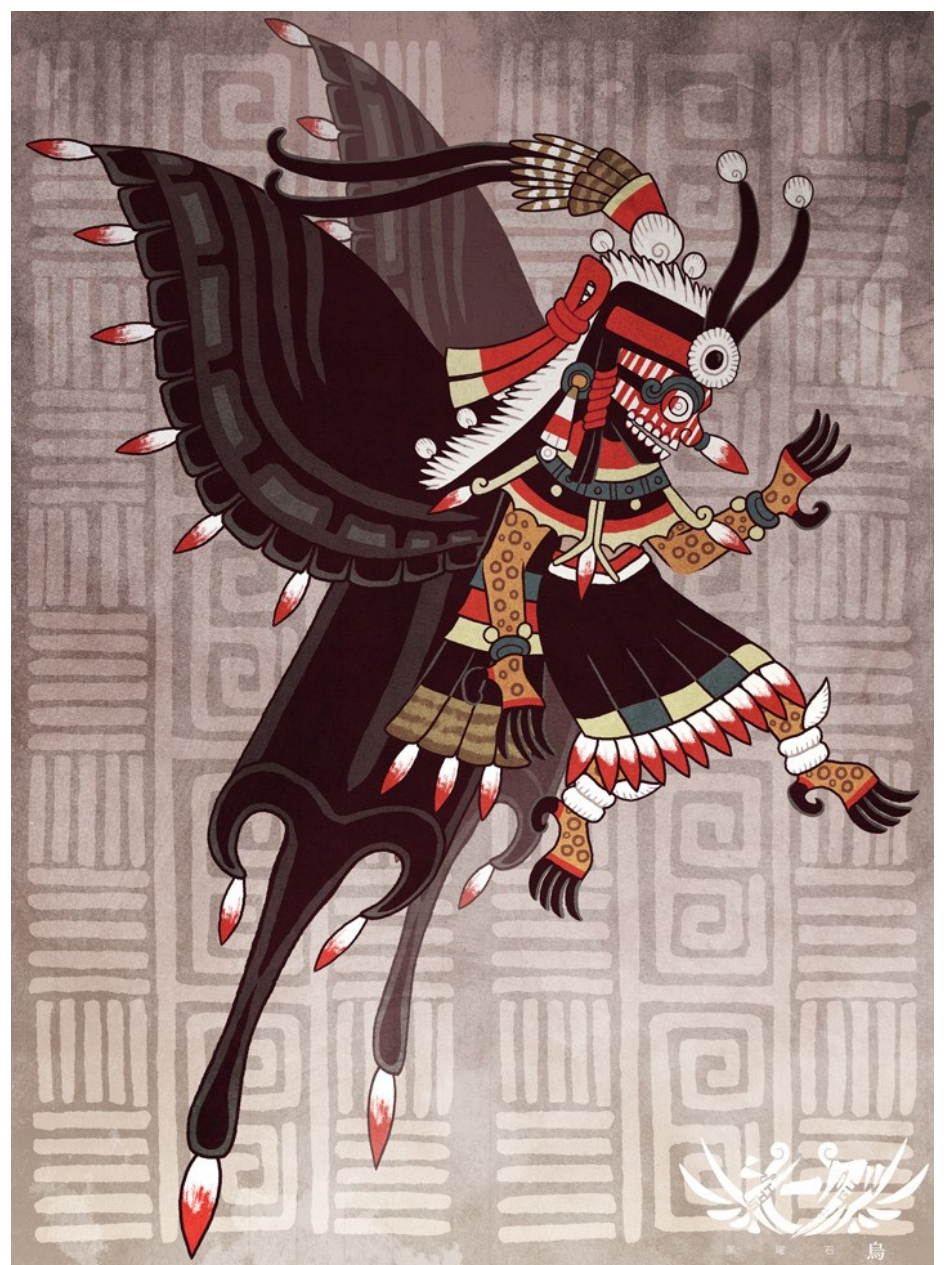


Ahuizotl

go in the water to save the baby. Once its victim is in the water, the Ahuizotl drags the person underwater, drowns them and rips out the victim's teeth, fingernails, and eyeballs and then proceeds to eat those parts because it's said that it likes the crunchy parts of its victims the most. Experts say that the Ahuizotl could have existed at one point in the past as an ancient relative to the otter.

Personally, I feel sightings of such beasts were actually of crocodiles or alligators attacking something or someone while being seen from a distance. Both these animals have a tendency to clamp on and roll their victims down into the water to drown them. It is very violent and quick.

ITZPAPALOTL was the obsidian butterfly and mother of the Titzimime demons.



Itzpapalotl

...Minor Gods and Aztec Demons

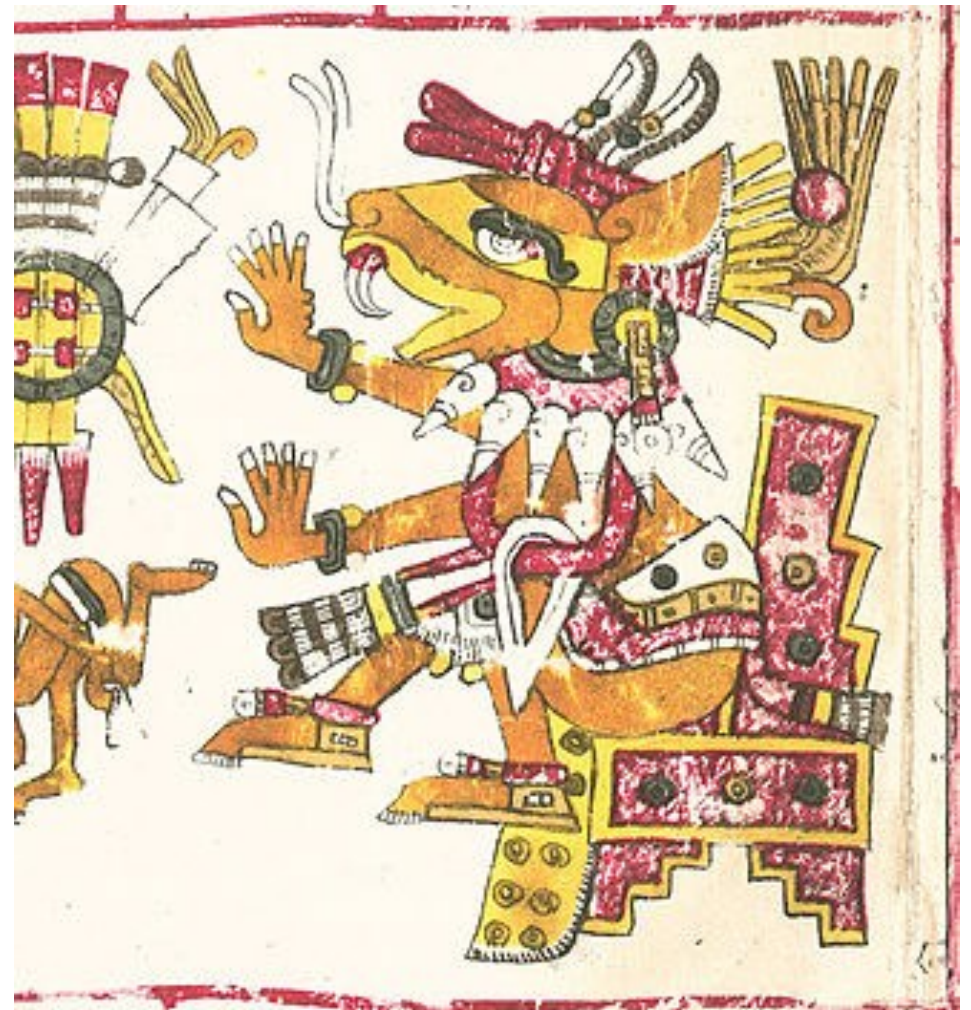
The Titzimime were demons who could be owned by the gods and apparently act as messengers and could also carry out tasks for their owners. Mexico being volcanic, the Aztecs loved the volcanic glass, otherwise known as obsidian, whose beauty climbs right up there with butterflies when worked properly. That is the tie in with the Titzimime even through the deception: The Titzimime ("monsters descending from above") were celestial demons in Aztec mythology that continuously threaten to destroy the world. They are said to be the stars that battle the sun each dusk and dawn. One story from the 'Histoyre du Mechique' describes the wraith of the Titzimime. Mayahuel was the goddess of maguey who lived with her grandmother, a Titzimime, in the sky.

One time, Quetzalcoatl convinced her to descend to earth with him and join with him into a forked tree with Quetzalcoatl as one branch and Mayahuel as the other. When Mayahuel's grandmother awakens and finds her missing, she summons other Titzimime to find her granddaughter. They descend to earth, and just as they arrive, the tree that Quetzalcoatl and Mayahuel had hidden as splits in two. Recognizing her grandmother as one of the branches, she tears it apart and passes the remains of Mayahuel to the other Titzimime to devour, leaving the branch that Quetzalcoatl disguised himself as fully intact. After they had left, Quetzalcoatl gathered up the Mayahuel's bones and buried them, and from that grave, the first maguey plant grew. (Maguery was the source of an alcoholic beverage that was important in Aztec ceremonies as both a ritual drink and a sacrificial offering.)

HUEHUECÓYOTL

Huehucóyotl, the Old Coyote is the Teotl (God) of dance, song, and mischief; he is the trickster who leads men astray. He rules over the day sign "Lizard" and the Trecena "Flower." He is a patron of liars, male sexuality, good luck, story-telling, and hedonism. He appears as a coyote, with human hands and feet. In Aztec mythology, Huehucóyotl is the auspicious god of music, dance, mischief and song of Pre-Columbian Mexico. He is the patron of uninhibited sexuality and rules over the day sign in the Aztec calendar named Cuetzpalin (lizard) and the fourth trecena Xochitl ("flower" in Nahuatl). He is depicted in the Codex Borbonicus as a dancing coyote with human hands and feet, accompanied by a human drummer. The name "very old coyote" conveyed positive meanings for the Aztec populace;

coyotes were an Aztec symbol of astuteness and worldly-wisdom, pragmatism and male beauty and youthfulness.



Huehucóyotl

The prefix "huehue", which in Nahuatl means "very old", was attached to gods in Aztec mythology that were revered for their old age, wisdom, philosophical insights and connections to the divine. Although often appearing in stories as male, Huehucóyotl can be gender changing, as is the case of many of the offspring of Tezcatlipoca. He can be associated with indulgence, male sexuality, good luck and story-telling. One of his prominent female lovers was Temazcalteci (also Temaxcaltechi), the goddess of bathing and sweat baths (temazcalli), also known as Mexican sauna and Xochiquetzal, the goddess of love, beauty, female sexuality, prostitutes, flowers and young mothers.

As all Aztec deities, Huehucóyotl was dualistic in his exercise of good and evil. He was perceived as a balanced god; depictions of his dark side include a coyote appearance (non-human) with black or yellow feathers, as opposed to the customary green feathers.

In most depictions of Huehucóyotl, he is followed by a human drummer, or groups of humans that appear to be friendly to him (as opposed to worshipping), which is exceptional in Meso-

...Minor Gods and Aztec Demons

american culture.

Stories derived from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis make him a benign prankster, whose tricks are often played on other gods or even humans but tended to backfire and cause more trouble for himself than for the intended victims. A great party-giver, he also was alleged to foment wars between humans to relieve his boredom. He is a part of the Tezcatlipoca (Smoky Mirror) family of the Mexica gods, and has their shapeshifting powers.

Those who had indications of evil fates from other gods would sometimes appeal to Huehucóyotl to mitigate or reverse their fate. Huehucóyotl shares many characteristics with the trickster Coyote of the North American tribes, including storytelling and choral singing.

The fourth day of the thirteen-day Mexican week belonged to Huehucóyotl. He was the only friend to Xolotl who is the god of twins, sickness and deformity and accompanies the dead to Mictlan (the underworld of Aztec mythology). Their association is born from the canine nature of both gods.

Among the many colorful gods of the Aztec empire, Huehucóyotl or Old Man Coyote (Huehue = old man), was a shape-shifting god of merriment and magic and sexual energy. Although he was an incorrigible trickster, often playing pranks that could turn cruel, he bestowed special gifts of song, dance, stories, and poetry. In the Coyote Kiva, Huehucoyotl is celebrated as the icon of poets, the Ancient Voice that speaks for those in silence, the Spirit Voice that wails for justice in a broken world, the Sacred Belly Voice that roars with laughter at human folly, and the Embracing Voice that whispers love songs to the night.

Here we find Huehucóyotl's sons and daughters, speaking in all his brightness and darkness, his sorrow, joy, wisdom, and truth. Poets from all over the world contribute to this seat in the kiva. Their works are presented according to topic.

The importance of Aztec music in the lives of the citizens of the empire is hinted at in this quote from Spanish friar Gerónimo de Mendieta:



Huehucóyotl (a portrait)

"Each lord had in his house a chapel with composer-singers of dances and songs, and these were thought to be ingenious in knowing how to compose the songs in their manner of meter and the couplets that they had. Ordinarily they sang and danced in the principal festivities that were every twenty days, and also on other less principal occasions..."

When a child was sent to school, music and the playing of instruments was an important subject to be learned. Students between 12 and 15 would learn songs that were important in their culture. And, as we see in the quote above, music was important enough that the nobles often had their own band, song writers and studio right at home. Elders in the home would teach children the songs they needed to know.

Aztec music was a constant and important part of life. Not only was music used for enjoyment, it was a way of passing on culture, of sharing an understanding of religion, of making an emotional connection with the events of life.

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by Tommy Clarkson

Golden Rain Tree, *Cassia fistula*

Family: *Fabaceae*

Also known as: *Yellow Shower, Golden Shower Tree, Indian Laburnum, Purging Cassia, Pudding Pipe Tree or Lluvia de Oro*

The genus *Cassia* includes more than 500 species of herbs, shrubs and trees that are native to the world's tropical areas but include some of its most spectacular flowering plants. However, discrepancies abound in reference materials with some "botanists" placing many of the species into a genus called *Senna* while many others consider that an invalid name. Now, add to that the fact that many of the individual species freely hybridize and . . . well, one may encounter no little confusion in identifying specific individuals in this family.

Aware of this, it was been with trepidation that I endeavored to write about this magnificent tree with its long, drooping sprays of flowers, awash on bare limbs in a mantle of glorious golden yellow.

These deciduous evergreen trees of thirty to fifty feet (9.14-15.24 meters) in height, and a spread of twenty to forty feet (6.10-12.19 meters), with their stunning, pendant, flower clusters – each flower comprised of five petals - are native to India. But, they also well proliferate here on the Central Pacific coast of Mexico. How and when did they get here? Simply, I can find little more than comments such as that they are now "*widely cultivated and naturalized in the tropics including West Indies and continental tropical America.*" Suffice it to say that they are here and we are all that much more the better for it!



If that's not beautiful, I don't know what is!

Drought tolerant, they like full sun and – as a most handsome ornamental tree that flowers from spring to early fall, attracting bees, butterflies and small birds – are often found in yards/gardens as a shade tree or along streets. But, be aware that the branches are brittle. It is grown best in well-draining soil. During the second half of the growing season, it can be susceptible to mildew or leaf spot. And, be not alarmed when the leaves fall from the tree while it is in its prodigious blooming mode.

The leaves can grow to two feet (61 cm) long with eight to sixteen large (eight inches (20 cm) in length ovate, glossy leaflets that closely resemble the leaves of a *Ficus benjamina*. Those stunning flowers display themselves in long drooping terminal racemes (clusters) with the individual flower stalks being one to two and a half inches long. Its fruit pods – which turn from dark green to black when mature - are pendulous, cylindrical, brown and septate (meaning divided by a septum). They're 10 to 36 inches (25.40-91.44) long, one-half to just over one inch (1.27-2.54 cm) in diameter and have 25-100 lenticular (shaped like a biconvex lens), lustrous, light brown seeds found in a sticky brown pulp.

While used as firewood, its reddish wood is hard, heavy, strong and durable and well suited in cabinetry for inlay work or use as posts or in the making of wheels or mortars. The bark is used in tanning.

It is Thailand's national tree, as well as the country's national flower. It is also the state flower of Kerala in India. That noted, be aware that a couple of small "downsides" to this tree are that the seed pods can become a litter problem and it has an unpleasant odor.

...Golden Rain Tree



The seeds pods look quite similar to those of the Catalpa of my youth and with which we would "sword fight!"

Lastly – and many will consider the following information as more than you needed to know - it is a veritable cornucopia for folk remedies. In fact, In Ayurvedic medicine, the Golden Shower tree is known *aragvadhā*, which means the 'disease killer'. (Deep breath, here we go!) It is used in the treatment of "tumors of the abdomen, glands, liver, stomach, and throat as well as cancer. It is employed as an astringent, laxative, purgative, and vermifuge as well as is used to treat burns, constipation, convulsions, delirium, diarrhea, dysuria, epilepsy, hematuria and pimples.

The seed is recognized as antibilious, carminative and a laxative; the root for adenopathy, burning sensations, leprosy, skin diseases, syphilis, and tubercular glands; the leaves for erysipelas, malaria, rheumatism, and ulcers; the buds for biliousness, constipation, fever, leprosy, and skin disease; the fruit for abdominal pain, constipation, fever, heart disease, and leprosy; the flowers for a purgative, use as an anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, abortifacient, demulcent, purgative, as well as being good for chest complaints, eye ailments, flu, heart and liver ailments, and rheumatism". . . . and a significant deal more, which time and space – "thankfully" (I believe I heard you mutter) - precludes inclusion!



If one squints their eyes just right, those really might look like large golden raindrops! (OK, OK, I've a rather active imagination!)

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What You Need to Know about Capital Gains

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

No one likes to pay taxes, especially on an appreciated investment. With careful planning, you could avoid or minimize capital-gains taxes.

Here are three tips.

Hold investments for at least 366 days

How long you keep investments in your portfolio before selling them determines the taxes you pay on your gains. Short-term capital gains are taxed as ordinary income. Long-term capital gains are taxed at rates of 0%, 15%, or 20%, depending on your tax bracket.

Invest in a low-turnover fund

Mutual funds realize capital gains just as individual investors do. Any time your fund sells a security at a gain, that gain is taxable. Since the law requires mutual funds to pass most of their net gains on to investors, you realize a capital gain. This is either long-term or short-term, depending on how long the mutual fund held the securities. You can avoid these types of gains by investing in a low-turnover mutual fund.

Use capital losses to offset capital gains

Do you have a losing investment in your portfolio? You might want to sell it and use the loss to offset gains. For example, if you have \$4,000 in capital gains, and you take a \$4,000 capital loss, the two will negate each other, and your tax liability on the gains will be eliminated.

Plus, if your investment losses for the year exceed your gains, you can use the balance to offset your ordinary income, up to a \$3,000 limit.

Note: *This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide financial advice for your particular situation.*

Yann Kostic, MBA and Tom Zachystal, CFP, are Presidents of their respective Assets Management firms, both US-Registered Investment Advisors (RIA). Tom is the San Francisco Financial Planners' Association President. Tom and Yann cater to US expats in Mexico and worldwide. Comments, questions or to request his newsletter, "News you can use" contact him at yannk@atlantisgrp.com, in the US at (321) 574-1 529 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.



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Cancún

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

February 3 - 6, 2016 (Day 28 - 31) Cancún, Quintana Roo, MX



Leaving the Cenote Suytun Resort, we headed directly east on Hwy 180 (libre) to Cancún. This was a short drive, only 50 km/30 miles. On our way, we came across an excellent drive-through propane station for the RVs and filled up. Our destination was the Trailer Park Mecoloco, really the only choice that is near Cancún. This campground is located along the ocean roadway. The beach, such as it is, is across the street. Mecoloco is ideal for those that want to visit Isla Mujeres as the ferry terminals are located on either side (Punta Juarez and Punta Sam).



Campground includes Mayan Ruins

Mecoloco is a large campground with lots of room for RVs, almost 100 spaces plus cabins. Interesting that the campground was situated on an archeological site and next door was a smaller Mayan pyramid. The pool was concrete and tile, but above ground. It was clear this area could be subject to flooding during hurricane season.

Mecoloco was very reasonable at \$200 pesos (\$10 USD) per day and over the next four days we were busy. On our arrival, it



Mecoloco office

was hot and humid, which was not so good for sleeping, but better for drinking cold beverages. That did not last long and, soon, we had clouds, rain and highs in the mid-20s °c/70s °f.

After getting our laundry sorted out down the street (12 pesos per kilo), we headed out for an excursion to the Hotel Zone located on a strip of land (originally an island with 3 residents), ocean on one side, large lagoon (yes full of crocodiles) on the other. Although the land is well developed with hotel resorts, upscale condos and tourist traps, there is access to the beach for the public. Our drive through the hotel zone included a stop at the tourist market with very intense vendors, lunch at a taco stand and a visit to a grocery store. Happily, Dan was successful in getting a bumper sticker and a tank top at a reasonable price.

Our remaining time was spent in the actual city of Cancún which sprung up in the mid-70s to support the tourist zone. Our visit included a regular market area, was much more relaxed, had better prices and no pushy sales people. We had lunch, looked around, some did some banking and made a few purchases. Closer to the campground, we found an agua purificada (water station) to refill all our empty bottles. Rafael and Anita were also in need of a dentist that was just down the road. How handy was that, eh? In the meantime, we did manage to have a couple of Happy Hours, not that we needed any special event to make us happy. Lounging in the tropics usually manages to accomplish that in early February all by itself. For those that returned to town the second time, the shopping was

...Cancún



Mecoloco RV Park, Cancún

much more focused, Lisa on fabric for an ongoing project, Kelly for wine and water, others on other items. Later in the afternoon most headed over to Isla Mujeres for the afternoon for a look around.

Our final evening at the campground (Saturday night) saw a couple of parties in the Cabanas and a Mayan Ceremony in the sweat lodge right next to Mike and Kelly's trailer that started at about sunset and ended approximately at sunrise. Many in our group can still hear the drumming 24 hours later. We are glad we made time in our schedule to visit Cancún though not sure we will ever return. As a tourist central destination supported by a modern Mexican town, there are many other destinations in Mexico we find more attractive.

There are actually two (2) Cancúns. Mexico tourism through FONATUR (National Fund for Tourism Development) started the tourist Cancún in the early 1970s and, soon after, the city of Cancún, to support the tourist zone. The city is located on the Caribbean Sea and is one of the easternmost points in Mexico.

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Cancún is located just north of Mexico's Caribbean coast resort band known as the Riviera Maya. Today, Ciudad Cancún has over 500,000 people and the Hotel Zone connected at both ends can accommodate more than 100,000 occupants on any day. When development was started on January 23, 1970, Isla Cancún had only three residents, caretakers of the coconut plantation of Don José de Jesús Lima Gutiérrez, who lived on Isla Mujeres, and there were only 117 people living in nearby Puerto Juárez, a fishing village and military base.



Mayan shaman at work

Due to the reluctance of investors to bet on an unknown area, the Mexican government had to finance the first nine hotels. The first hotel financed was the Hyatt Cancún Caribe, but the first hotel actually built was the Playa Blanca, which later became a Blue Bay hotel, and is now Temptation Resort. At the

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AV. LA AUDIENCIA
by La Catrina

...Cancún



All Ritmo Resort on the way to the campground

time, it was an elite destination, famous for its virgin white sand beaches. The city began as a tourism project in 1974, as an Integrally Planned Center, a pioneer of FONATUR (Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo, National Fund for Tourism Development), formerly known as INFRATUR. Since then, it has undergone a comprehensive transformation, from being a fisherman's island surrounded by virgin forest and undiscovered shores, to being one of the two most well-known Mexican resorts, along with Acapulco. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), through its foundation UNWTO-Themis, awarded the Best of the Best award "for excellence and good governance" to the Trust for Tourism Promotion of Cancún on February 3, 2007. With this award, Cancún ensured the ongoing support of the Department of Education and Knowledge Management of the WTO (World Trade Organization).

Most 'Cancunenses' are from Yucatán and other Mexican states. A growing number are from the rest of the Americas and Europe. The municipal authorities have struggled to provide public services for the constant influx of people, as well as limiting squatters and irregular developments, which now occupy an estimated ten-to-fifteen percent of the mainland area on the fringes of the city. In the 21st century, Cancún had largely avoided the bloodshed associated with the trade of illegal drugs, although it is known for its retail drug sales to tourists as well as for being a center of money laundering. The links with Cancún date from the 1990s and early 2000s, when the

area was controlled by the Juárez and Gulf drug cartels. In recent years, Los Zetas, a group that broke away from the Gulf Cartel, has taken control of many smuggling routes through the Yucatán, according to the US Drug Enforcement Administration.



Cancún lagoon, not for swimming

The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Cancún from November 29, 2010 to December 10, 2010. Apart from the island tourist zone (actually part of the world's second-longest coral reef), the Mexican residential section of the city, the downtown part of which is known as "El Centro," follows a master plan that consists of "supermanzanas" (superblocks), giant trapezoids with a central, open, non-residential area cut in by u-shaped residential streets. These open centers usually have walkways and 'sidewalks' around a central garden park, or soccer fields, or a library, etc. which make the mainland "Mexican" Cancún bicycle-friendly. The residential roads of central or 'Mainland' Cancún, U-shaped and cul-de-sacs, insulate housing from the noise and congestion of the main flow of traffic. Mainland Cancún has a central market that resembles an outlet mall, colorful buildings on a pedestrian city block.

Mayan archaeological zones

There are some small Mayan vestiges of the pre-Columbian Maya civilization in Cancún. El Rey (Las Ruinas del Rey) is located in the Hotel Zone. El Meco, a more substantial site, is found on the mainland just outside the city limits on the road north to Punta Sam (near the campground). Close by in the Riviera Maya and the Grand Costa Maya, there are sites such as Cobá and Muyil (Riviera) the small Polé (now Xcaret), and Kohunlich, Kinichná, Dzibanché, Oxtankah, Tulum, and Chacchoben, in the

...Cancún

south of the state. Chichén Itzá is in the neighboring state of Yucatán.

Weather: Good and Bad

Thanks to the Yucatán current continually bringing warm water from farther south, the sea temperature is always very warm, with lows of 79°F (26°C) in winter and highs of 84°F (29°C) in summer. The tropical storm season lasts from May to December. The rainy season extends into January with peak precipitation in September. February to early May tend to be drier with only occasional scattered showers.

Cancún is located in one of the main Caribbean hurricane impact areas. Although large hurricanes are rare, they have struck near to Cancún in recent years, Hurricane Wilma in 2005 being the largest. Hurricane Gilbert made a devastating direct hit on Cancún in September 1988 and the tourist hotels needed to be rebuilt. In both cases, federal, state and municipal authorities were well prepared to deal with most of the effects on tourists and local residents. Hurricane Dean in 2007 also made its mark on the city of Cancún.

Hurricane Gilbert

1988's Hurricane Gilbert was the second most intense hurricane ever observed in the Atlantic basin. It landed on the Yucatán peninsula after crossing over the island of Cozumel. In the Cancún region, a loss of \$87 million (1989, USD) due to a decline in tourism, was estimated for the months October, November and December in 1988.

Hurricane Wilma

In October 21, 2005, Hurricane Wilma made landfall on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula as a powerful Category 4 hurricane, with strong winds in excess of 150 mph (240 km/h). The hurricane's eye first passed over the island of Cozumel, and then made an official landfall near Playa del Carmen in the state of Quintana Roo at around midnight on October 22 EDT, with winds near 140 mph (230 km/h). Portions of the island of Cozumel experienced the calm eye of Wilma for several hours with some blue skies and sunshine visible at times. The eye slowly drifted northward, with the center passing just to the west of Cancún, Quintana Roo.

Hurricane Dean

Two years later, in 2007, Hurricane Dean made landfall as a Category 5 storm in Majahual, 190 miles (310 km) to the south of Cancún. Fierce winds at the edge of Dean's impact cone stripped sand off 7.5 miles (12.1 km) of beaches from Punta Cancún (Camino Real Hotel) to Punta Nizuc (Club Med). The authorities asked tourism operators to suspend sending tourists to Cancún while Hurricane Dean was approaching, but did ask airlines to send empty planes, which were then used to evacuate tourists already there.

Often you will see discounted stays offered for the Mayan Riviera, including Cancún in the late summer and fall. Now you know why!

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A market in Cancún, the city



Lots of fruits and veggies here!

...Cancún



Dan and Roland with Catrina statues



Piñatas!

...Cancún



Lunch stop at Cancún hotel row

Interesting furniture store



Flowers anyone?

...Cancún

Inexpensive ferry ride to Isla Mujeres



Outskirts of Cancún



...Cancún



Hwy 180 libre



Lots to see!

...Cancún



Gang hanging around the pool

Guys are in charge of the laundry



Village local with wheels



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Salsa de Molcajete

Roasted Tomato and Green Chile Salsa

This is archetypal salsa, made from tomatoes, green chiles, cilantro, and lime. But more than a mere mix of ingredients, salsa de molcajete uses centuries-old techniques to combine flavors, bringing out the best of each.

Ingredients

- ✓ 6 plum tomatoes (about 1 pound)
- ✓ 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- ✓ 2 jalapeño peppers
- ✓ 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ✓ 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- ✓ 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
- ✓ 1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions

Step 1

Preheat broiler.

Step 2

Place the tomatoes, garlic, and jalapeños on a foil-lined baking sheet. Broil 16 minutes, turning after 8 minutes. Cool and peel tomatoes and garlic. Combine the garlic and peppers in a molcajete, mortar, or bowl; pound with a pestle or the back of a spoon to form a paste. Add tomatoes, and coarsely crush using the pestle or spoon. Combine the tomato mixture, cilantro, and remaining ingredients in a small bowl.

Chef's Notes

Roasting tomatoes gives them a sweet and complex taste; rinsing onion under cold water makes it crisp; and crushing roasted garlic and chiles in a mortar releases their full flavor. Though it's typically done in a molcajete (Mexican lava rock mortar), you can also make this salsa using a marble mortar and pestle (as we did). Finely chopping the garlic and chile in a food processor then adding the tomatoes and pulsing the mixture until everything is coarsely pureed will yield great-tasting results as well.

Recipe source: myrecipes.com



The molcajete was used by pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican cultures, including the Aztec and Maya, stretching back several thousand years. Traditionally carved out of a single block of vesicular basalt, molcajetes are typically round in shape and supported by three short legs. They are frequently decorated with the carved head of an animal on the outside edge of the bowl, giving the molcajete the appearance of a short, stout, three-legged animal. The pig is the most common animal head used for decoration of this type.

In the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican period, the molcajete had a lid and the set was believed to be used for burial of members in society of high-status. Additionally, throughout the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican period, they were decorated by various colors and designs, and orange wares were identified as the most common characteristic of the molcajete. The matching hand-held grinding tool, known as a temolote (Mexican Spanish, from Nahuatl *texolotl*), is also made of the same basalt material.

Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition

1		2		■	3	4		5
	■		■	6	■		■	
7					■	8		
	■	■	■		■		■	
■	9	10						■
11	■		■		■	■	■	12
13			■	14		15		
	■		■		■		■	
16				■	17			

Across

- 1 cure
- 3 for, in order to
- 7 bigger, comparative form of grande, older, in this sense, comparative form of viejo, vieja
- 8 that, that over there
- 9 to forget
- 13 (you/usted) were going, (he, she) was going
- 14 grave, tomb
- 16 waves
- 17 cold

Down

- 1 how, sorry? what?
- 2 king
- 4 sand
- 5 years
- 6 artist
- 10 flame
- 11 but (on the contrary, but rather)
- 12 case, instance
- 15 sea

Last month's crossword solution:

1	c	a	2	p	a	■	3	e	4	s	t	5	e
	a	■	u	■	6	e	■	i	■	r			
7	f	u	e	■	8	m	e	n	t	e			
	é	■	d	■	p	■	■	■	■	s			
	■	9	s	o	n	r	i	10	s	a	■		
11	a	■	■	■	e	■	o	■	12	c			
13	p	a	14	s	o	s	■	15	m	í	o		
	i	■	o	■	a	■	o	■	s				
16	e	l	l	a	■	17	i	s	l	a			

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Mexico's Independence

from the Path to Citizenship series

In the early 19th century, Napoleon's occupation of Spain led to the outbreak of revolts all across Spanish America. On September 16, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, launched the Mexican War of Independence with the issuing of his Grito de Dolores, or "Cry of Dolores." The revolutionary tract called for the end of Spanish rule in Mexico, redistribution of land, and racial equality. After some initial successes, Hidalgo was defeated, captured, and executed. However, he was followed by other peasant leaders, such as José María Morelos y Pavón, Mariano Matamoros, and Vicente Guerrero, who all led armies of native and racially mixed revolutionaries against the Spanish and the Royalists.

Ironically, it was the Royalists—made up of Mexicans of Spanish descent and other conservatives—who ultimately brought about independence. In 1820, liberals took power in Spain, and the new government promised reforms to appease the Mexican revolutionaries. In response, Mexican conservatives called for independence as a means of maintaining their privileged position in Mexican society.

In early 1821, Agustín de Iturbide, the leader of the Royalist

forces, negotiated the Plan of Iguala with Vicente Guerrero. Under the plan, Mexico would be established as an independent constitutional monarchy, the privileged position of the Catholic Church would be maintained, and Mexicans of Spanish descent would be regarded as equals to pure Spaniards. Mexicans of mixed or pure Indian blood would have lesser rights.

Iturbide defeated the Royalist forces still opposed to independence, and the new Spanish viceroy, lacking money, provisions, and troops, was forced to accept Mexican independence. On August 24, 1821, O'Donojú signed the Treaty of Córdoba, thus ending New Spain's dependence on Old Spain.

In 1822, as no Bourbon monarch to rule Mexico had been found, Iturbide was proclaimed the emperor of Mexico. However, his empire was short-lived, and in 1823 republican leaders Santa Anna and Guadalupe Victoria deposed Iturbide and set up a republic with Guadalupe Victoria as its first president.

Source: History.com Image source: Wikimedia Commons
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