

The Eye

Beach, Village + Urban Living in Oaxaca

February 2022

Issue 115

FREE



"Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo,
but what you want is someone who will take the
bus with you when the limo breaks down."

Oprah Winfrey



Meet Our Team of Professionals

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Editor's Letter

**"Help each other. Love everyone. Every leaf.
Every ray of light. Forgive."
Terrence Malick**

It's almost Valentine's Day ... again. When *The Eye* contributors discuss upcoming topics there is always a bit of a sigh when it comes to this issue as we try and weave something about love and romance into it. Most of our contributors are married and have been for decades - the Chaikens met as children and have been married for almost 60 years! Can you imagine! Well, maybe you can, but I assure you it is difficult for me.

I am from a generation that craves variety and doesn't really expect anything to last that long. Just a few decades ago people bought appliances for life. They would have a TV set for 20 years! I am from a generation that upgrades. And while the latest model may be sleeker and have a sharper image, it's also made of flimsy plastic and not made to last. It's built to be tossed into a landfill in four years.

With a cultural diet of romantic comedies, love songs and fairy-tale happy endings, is it any wonder that many of us have gotten used to moving on when things aren't picture perfect, rather than focusing on repair? We live in a time where you can reject dozens of people with a swipe over your morning coffee. Has romantic love become disposable?

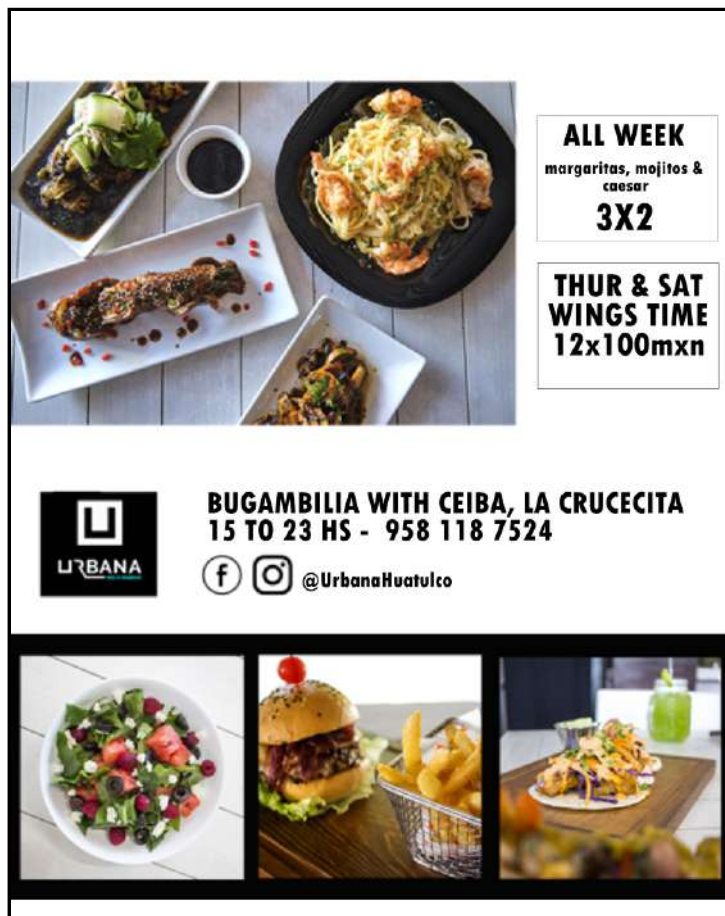
I am very fortunate to be surrounded by many amazing and long-term couples like those who work on *The Eye*, but I am sure they would tell me it hasn't always been easy. In a time where women celebrate their financial and emotional independence more than previous generations it is understandable that we have come to expect more, although I am not sure we are better for it.

I also know many inspirational women who are going at it alone. When I asked an older Mexican friend if she would consider getting a boyfriend she laughed and said that she didn't want to have to do more laundry or cook for more people.

Wherever you are on the romantic relationship spectrum, it's easy to invite more love into your life this month. Talk to your neighbors, help a stranger, write a letter to someone you haven't spoken to in twenty years, call your parents, your siblings. Wish the best to those who have wronged you and fissured your heart and surround yourself with people who want the best for you. Hug a tree, pick up garbage, repair things, use less, buy less, give stuff away, pick up the check. Love your life and let that love spread out and touch everything.

See you next month,

Jane



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**Opinions and words are those of the authors
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The New Centro de Congresos y Reuniones at Marina Chahué

By Julie Etra

I don't know how many of our readers were a bit perplexed upon returning to Huatulco to find a few of our favorite restaurants and Huatulco Dive Center gone from the Chahué marina. Many a memorable meal, and many memorable dives with HDC, from that marina. The boat yard has also been cleared out, although boats remain docked, and the marina is still functioning. There is a new seafood taco truck, *Marea Alta* (high tide), parked at the entrance – yum! Thumbs up!

FONATUR (*Fondo Nacional de Fomento de Turismo*) is the federal agency that manages tourism, primarily in the form of real estate; FONATUR developed *Bahías de Huatulco*, and owns and manages the marina and environs. The agency is in the early phases of developing a large conference and meeting center, with plans to include retail shops, restaurants, a cultural center, a theatre, green spaces, and other tourist amenities.

But given the outcome of *Avenida 5* (Fifth Avenue – the short cut from Santa Cruz to La Crucecita), which was originally designed to support retail stores, I questioned the viability of this ambitious project and the potential businesses it would attract. A Conference Center? For what type of conference(s)? Several years ago, I investigated hosting a meeting for an international organization on whose Board of Directors I served, and toured Dreams as well as Las Brisas. At least at the time it seemed both resorts would be able to handle a mid-sized conference and perhaps associated trade show, and both appeared very attractive and comfortable, with all the amenities including hotel rooms, restaurants, etc., and a BEACH.

When I discussed with *The Eye* editor Jane Bauer the possibility of writing this article, she commented that I might have difficulty finding much detail. Well, she was right, but I did find the basics, although the information may be outdated at any moment.

The development is a collaboration between Fonatur and the State of Oaxaca, represented by the current Governor Alejandro Murat Hinojosa. The project has selected the firm TEN Arquitectos, founded and led by the gifted architect Enrique Norten; TEN has worked on major projects around the world.



For this project, TEN was commissioned to design a sophisticated facility centered around the existing marina, in itself a major attraction. Listed on the TEN Arquitectos website as *Centro de Congresos Chahué*, TEN is “carrying out the preliminary studies” and has developed the project management schedule; according to Norten's posting on the Facebook edition of *Revista entre rayas* (Between the Lines Review), they are in the final phase of producing the construction documents.

A visit to the site reveals that construction has begun with the removal of the boat yard and concrete pavement of the marina. A cul-de-sac, with improved infrastructure, eliminating the access road from the east side, was completed last year.

The center will consist of 11,000 square meters (approximately 3 acres) of new built structures, associated infrastructure, and public and green space. The principal auditorium will consist of approximately 1,580 square meters (approximately 17,000 sq. ft), with a capacity of 1,285 people. It will feature a stage, state-of-the-art acoustics and lighting, and breakout rooms for smaller venues. A wide range of “world-class” activities is envisioned, including concerts, exhibits, academic conferences. Of course, the administrative offices of Marina Chahué will be upgraded and continue to operate in the new complex.

For the time being this is exciting, I think, as this classy facility will of course attract more people, but I am a little selfish and protective of this small community. On the other hand, I am not holding my breath. After all, the Oaxaca City/coast highway has been under construction for twelve years.

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Jewish Weddings in Mexico and around the World

By Marcia Chaiken and Jan Chaiken

We recently talked to a friend who had attended one of the newest international trends in pre-wedding ceremonies: a proposal party. How does it work? Planned by the prospective groom with the help of family and friends, but putatively without any involvement by the bride-to-be, they select a time and location and invite those close to the couple to gather to witness the formal proposal. The prospective bride is provided with an excuse to appear at the selected location at a time after everyone else. When she arrives, she is greeted by the one hoping to be her spouse, who “pops the question” and presents her with a ring. When she accepts, the gathered group cheers and then all celebrate – most often with toasts, a festive meal, music and dancing. (Of course, proposal parties may also be for same-gender couples, so you can just change the nouns and pronouns accordingly.)



Traditional Jewish weddings, whether in Mexico, north of the border, or Europe, follow more or less the same format. Brides and their families often spend much time deciding on specific details of music, dress, decorations, and reception food and drink so that their occasion will be special. But thinking back over the dozens of ceremonies and celebrations we've attended, including our own almost 59 years ago, they follow a pattern established centuries ago.

Although proposal parties are thought to be a new form of pre-wedding celebration, they actually are similar to one of the oldest forms of ceremonies. Jewish rituals have for centuries incorporated pre-wedding ceremonies at which the prospective bride agrees to marry a man, traditionally a man selected for her by her family, and the ritual includes similar celebratory components. Since the 12th century among Jews in Europe, the ceremony has been called Tena'im in Hebrew, which translates to Conditions. The couple, who often meet for the first time at the ceremony, formally agree to marry in the future. They sign an engagement contract stating the conditions for the forthcoming marriage, usually including a wedding date, that had been worked out by their families. Then the couple exchange articles of value – most often jewelry. The ceremony is finalized by the breaking of a ceramic plate dropped on a hard surface by both mothers of the couple.

The origins of the breaking of the plate are obscure. Some say the broken plate symbolizes that the engagement breaks the possibility of the couple marrying anyone else. Others say the breaking is a metaphor for making a bond between the couple which breaks the bond they had with their mothers. Yet another explanation is that the breaking of the plate foreshadows the breaking of a glass that will happen at the forthcoming wedding ceremony. Independent of the explanation, at the conclusion of the ceremony the couple has a legal status of being committed to each other – but definitely not yet married. Nowadays, among orthodox Jews this ceremony is scheduled to take place immediately before the marriage ceremony, thus truncating the “not yet married” period. Among Jews who follow more modern practices, Tena'im has given way to engagement parties or, as already described, proposal parties.

In the weeks before the wedding, the bride and the groom, even in cases where they have been living together, separate and don't see each other as they prepare for the event. They remain apart even during the day of the wedding until the groom, accompanied by the men and musicians, enters a room where the bride is seated and is waiting surrounded by women friends and family. The groom lifts the bridal veil off the face of his intended, and once sure that a substitution has not been made, as in the biblical substitution of Leah for Rachel, he lowers the veil and the men, accompanied by music, leave. In modern years, some couples have decided to forego this ceremony and choose to wait until they meet under the huppah, a small four-cornered tent that symbolizes the home they will build together.

Virtually all Jewish weddings take place under a huppah. In fact, the word huppah has come to mean the core of the marriage ceremony and is used in wedding invitations, for example, “Gathering at 5pm and huppah at 6pm.” For several decades, brides went wild demanding that their huppah be constructed from wild roses or other rare and expensive materials. Fortunately, most brides now have recovered their senses and select a traditional huppah consisting of a lovely cloth held aloft with four corner poles. To honor people in their lives, the families of the couple invite four people to hold the poles during the ceremony, giving them the best view of the proceedings.

Core to a Jewish marriage is the ketubah, a legal contract in which the rights of the bride are spelled out in great detail, including provisions to be made for her during the marriage and monies or properties she will receive if her husband predeceases her or if the marriage ends in divorce. This ancient form of a “pre-nup” protects the bride and is retained in her possession. Before the main ceremony, both the bride and groom sign the document, it is witnessed and signed by two friends of the families, and also signed by the officiating rabbi or other officiant authorized to perform marriages. In the past few decades, following an ancient practice, once the terms of the ketubah have been agreed on by both families, an artist is hired to literally draw up the ketubah, and after the marriage the framed ketubah is displayed like a piece of artwork on a wall of the couple's home.

The procession at a Jewish wedding is indicative of the way Jewish practice has been shaped by the surrounding culture. By long-standing tradition, the parents of the groom first accompany him to the huppah and then the parents of the bride accompany her to the huppah. But this tradition has been modified to allow the grandparents, siblings, other family members and friends to participate in the wedding processional. And, as in many non-Jewish weddings, a Jewish bride commonly is walked down an aisle to the huppah accompanied by her father to the strains of "Here Comes the Bride." However, unlike non-Jewish weddings, the father is not asked to "give her away." Instead, traditionally the bride is led seven times in a circle around the waiting groom.

Under the huppah, two ceremonies take place – the sanctification, in which the ketubah is read, and blessings are recited over a cup of wine from which the couple both drink, and the rabbi blesses them as sanctified and dedicated solely to each other. Then the actual moment of the wedding, when the groom slips the ring on the middle finger of the left hand of his bride and recites in Hebrew, "Behold by this ring you are consecrated to me as my wife according to the laws of Moses and Israel." In some modern ceremonies, the bride may also give the groom a ring, usually with an appropriate verse in Hebrew from the Bible, such as "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." Next, seven blessings are recited. In a recent interpretation, the blessings are for love, a loving home, playful humor, wisdom, health, creativity, and community. The ceremony is concluded by the groom stomping on and shattering a glass, and all assembled shouting "Mazel Tov."

Following the ceremony, it is traditional for the bride and groom to be given 20 minutes or so to be absolutely alone, with two honored guests posted at the door of the room in which they are sequestered to ensure that no one disturbs them. After they emerge, they are commonly seated at a table just for the two of them and everyone is obliged to entertain them with singing and dancing. One of the dances that almost always takes place is the "hora," an Israeli circle dance. And when the bride or groom is the youngest child and all their older siblings are married, the mother is lifted in a chair in the middle of the circle dance so all can congratulate her on accomplishing all mothers' traditional dream – seeing all her children happily married.

We have watched over the decades as traditional Jewish engagement and wedding practices come and go or morph into new forms. With assimilation of Jews an ongoing trend and rates of intermarriage high, we have celebrated family Buddhist/Jewish (BuJu) weddings, Hindu/Jewish (HinJu) weddings, weddings jointly officiated by Christian and Jewish clergy, and one wedding of a Jewish nephew and his Christian bride on a beach in Lanai where an enormous Hawaiian Kahuna priest tied the knot. Two of the most traditional Jewish weddings we celebrated were marriages of same-gender couples.

Our marriage had all the elements of a Jewish wedding: huppah, ketubah, sanctification, rings, seven blessings, and breaking of the glass, as did the wedding of our son and daughter-in-law and many family members here in Mexico and the US. However, we would be delighted but have no expectation of our grandchildren necessarily following the same traditions. Many couples of their generation have even eschewed marriage altogether, much less traditional weddings. But on the other hand, reportedly several couples of their ages have said they don't want an engagement party made by their parents but rather a Jewish Tena'im proposal party. We will just have to wait and see whether we get to experience the continuation of these ancient traditions.

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Spanish Lesson

By Julie Etra



We are resurrecting a monthly column that addresses local phrases to help you with your stay here in Huatulco, be it short or long term. This month we will focus on road signs and other interesting asides.

- Ceda el paso = yield
- Desviacion = detour. Via is the Latin root for route, way. The vehicles marked with 'viales' could be translated as highway patrol, but not as we know them in the USA.
- Dos sentidos = two-way traffic
- Grava suelta = loose gravel
- Maquinas pesadas = heavy equipment working
- Un sentido = one way
- Solo carril = one lane only
- Tope, vibradores = speed bumps (these come in a large assortment; check the EYE archives for more detail)
- No estacionarse (often an E with a circle and red line across the E) = no parking
- No tire basura = no littering

And what is with those seemingly randomly located stops signs heading east on Highway 200, ending at Secrets, with no one stopping? Those are for future hotels with associated bus stops and pedestrian crossings. And in La Crucecita there is the 'no one stops at the stop sign' at the intersection of Chahue eastbound and the north entrance to Calle Gardenia (one way), across from the ADO bus depot. And an Honorable Mention for the stop sign on Benito Juarez Blvd just west of the golf course where it turns south towards La Crucecita.

A few words in Zapotec. Zapotec is one of many distinct languages in the state of Oaxaca (there are at least 16), predating the arrival of the Spaniards. It resides in the family of otomangues and within the family are multiple dialects in accordance with the region, e.g the Isthmus versus the Valley of Oaxaca, often mutually unintelligible. Here in Huatulco, we have several restaurants and a few hotels with Zapotec names, such as:

- Bie' che' is a bar and restaurant located above Xipol in La Crucecita, the former location of La Crema. It means 'rejoice', 'be glad'.
- Binniguenda is an all-inclusive hotel in Santa Cruz. It means 'ancient people spawned from the clouds.'
- Bladuyu is the name of a restaurant at the entrance to Chahue where they feature dishes from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It is named for the clay (terracotta) dishes used in many restaurants.
- Itoo', another restaurant, is in Santa Cruz. It means 'go eat'.



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It's Not Over until the Tamales Sing!

By Deborah Van Hoewyk

If you've spent more than one winter in Huatulco, you know all about the *rosca de reyes*, the usually ring-shaped “king cakes,” covered with candied fruit and thick icing strips, that replace all the whole-grain baguettes and ciabattas you went to get from the Chedraui bakery. The *rosca* is to celebrate the January 6 arrival of the three Magi, or kings, at the birthplace of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem, bearing, of course, the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And that, you think, is that for the season of Navidad. Back to the baguettes.



Oh, no, not so. Within the *rosca* is a tiny figurine of baby Jesus – big *rosca*s have several. Should you get a baby Jesus in your piece of the cake, you are obligated to Navidad right through Día de Candelaria, or Candlemas Day, on February 2. Jesus was born Jewish, and the rituals of birth required that when he was 40 days old, he and Mary would go to the temple, where Jesus would be presented and Mary would be purified – February 2 is the 40th day after December 25. And in the Aztec calendar, some say February 2 is New Year's Day (more likely February 12 or 13), so the Christian Candlemas was easily combined with the Aztec celebration.

And what is your obligation on Día de Candelaria? You host a party, and you serve tamales! The tamales are usually accompanied by *atole* (a corn/masa-based hot drink) and/or *champurrado* (the chocolate version of *atole*). The menu is an Aztec/Spanish “mashup”; the Nahuatl word *tamalli* means “wrapped food” – and what are tamales, if not “wrapped food”? Oh, by the way, the thing itself is a “tamal” – no 'e' on the end, that's part of the plural ending. Of course, as they say on the Sabritos potato chip truck, *¿A que no puedes comer solo uno?*

And *tamallis* were exactly what the Aztecs offered the gods Tláloc, Chalchiuhtlicue, and Quetzalcóatl at their February New Year's Day celebration. According to Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, author of the Florentine Codex (a hand-written 1577 manuscript describing life in New Spain), the Aztecs “made some tamales called *tzatzapaltamalli*, made of pigtails (amaranth) or ashes ... and they offered them in the same temple of the place in front of the goddess they called Coatlicue or Coatlantonan.” (Who knows how the names of the gods were really spelled? And whether, bless them, they were happy eating ashes?)

At the time Christ was born, the Aztecs might have offered tamales with just the corn dough filling, or they might have used turkey or turkey eggs, flamingo, rabbits or gophers, squash, beans, fruits, honey. They even used fish and that little aquatic salamander, the *axolotl*. (Greatly endangered, the *axolotl* is soon scheduled to appear on a new \$50 peso note; it is hoped the cutie-pie portrait will encourage conservation – for other updates on Mexican currency, see article elsewhere in this issue.)

Do It Up Right in Tlacotalpan

While Día de Candelaria and fiestas with tamales are not celebrated everywhere in Mexico, one of the best places to go is Tlacotalpan (in Nahuatl, it means “the land between the rivers”), a colorful town (no paint has been spared) on the banks of the Papaloapan River in the state of Veracruz.

From time immemorial, the inhabitants held a festival for Chalchiuhtlicue, the goddess of the seas and of beauty, who wears a skirt of jade. Nowadays, Tlacotalpan celebrates Día de Candelaria with a ten-day festival dedicated to the Virgin of Candelaria. This version of the Virgin is the patron saint of the Canary Islands, but she came to Latin America with the conquistadores, reportedly on a religious medal around the neck of Hernán Cortés.

The festival in Tlacotalpan has parades with *mojigangas*, puppets with papier mâché heads – giants for the adult parade, minis for the *infantil* parade; bull-running; a *cabalgata* (a parade on horseback, brilliant costumes, floats, etc.); *jaraneros*, or musicians who play the *jarana* type of *son jarocho* (sound of Veracruz), perform; everywhere, people are dancing the *fandango*; and the Virgin arrives upriver in a boat parade and is carried through the streets to the square.



And the Tamales?

Mexican tamales pretty much all start with *masa*, a corn dough, but every region seems to have a unique version of the “wrapped food.” Even the wrappings vary, from corn husks to plantain leaves, and if you're an ace, strips of maguey cactus or empty avocado shells. One culinary website estimated that you can find 500 – or so – types of tamales in Mexico.

Here in **Oaxaca**, tamales are usually wrapped in plantain leaves, and can include a variety of fillings – chicken, mole sauce, and chepil (a local green, very common in next-door **Chiapas**) are just a few of the possibilities sold on the beach in Santa Cruz Huatulco.



If you go to the Yucatán, they might call your tamales “vaporcitos,” meaning the pork and/or chicken-filled tamales are steamed. Actually, most tamales are steamed, they just aren't called “vaporcitos” and cooked in a hole in the ground called a *pib*, as they are in the Yucatán. The filling is spiced with *recado*, usually a red spice mixture that can contain annatto, oregano, cumin, garlic, salt, ground dried peppers, and allspice, cloves and/or cinnamon.

In Campeche, also in the Yucatán, you can get tamales *chaya*, filled with ground pork, tomato, olives, toasted pumpkin seeds and lots of chopped chaya, a local green. Once you unwrap your tamal chaya, you can top it with tomato sauce and fresh cheese.

In **Puebla and Morelos**, you can get tamales de frijol, filled with pureed beans and cheese.

With about 495 types of tamales to go, the list is endless. You can get tamales by **color**, that is the color of the sauce added to the masa – verde or rojo. You can have tamales with **mole** – that distinctive sauce, claimed by both Oaxaca and Puebla that comes in seven (*más* or *menos*) varieties. There are **tamales de rajas**, strips of peppers, from mild to off the Scoville scale, covered in melted cheese.

Finally, you can have tamales for dessert. These are the **pink, or sweet, tamales**. The masa filling is complemented with chocolate, berries, pineapple, sweet spices, or other fruits, and tinted with red food coloring. Back when tamales were made for the gods, however, the pink tamales were tinted with cochineal, those little red, scaly insects found on cactus paddles and used to make textile dye. Are they safe to eat? You betcha – ¡buen provecho!



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Enduring Novels of Unrequited Love

By Carole Reedy

“The final test of a novel will be our affection for it, as it is the test of our friends, of anything else that we cannot define.” E M Forster in *Aspects of the Novel*

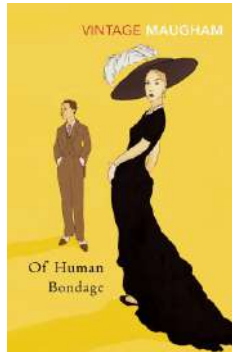
Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche felt that the state of unrequited love was preferable to that of no love at all, saying “indispensable ... to the lover is his unrequited love, which he would at no price relinquish for a state of indifference.”

However debatable that idea, we've all experienced unrequited love at one time or another, and the feelings it evokes have provided novelists fodder over the centuries, starting with Dante and Beatrice in *The Divine Comedy*.

Here are a few literary gems that center on unrequited love. All remain as fresh as the day they were written.

***Of Human Bondage*, by Somerset Maugham (1915)**

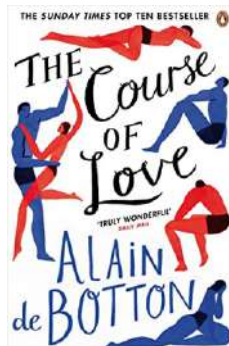
Listed first among these noted authors is Maugham's semi-autobiographical masterpiece about the disabled Philip Carey, who falls in love with a waitress who subsequently treats him cruelly. The story follows Philip from the struggle with his disability as a teenager in an English vicarage to his studies in Heidelberg, a short stint as an artist in Paris, and then back to England where he meets Mildred, the beginning of the pain of unrequited love.



Maugham actually had more success writing for the theater, although today he is best known for his novels. *Of Human Bondage* was written when he was 23 and finishing medical school. When he was refused an advance on the manuscript, he put the book aside and concentrated on his successful career writing for the theater. Maugham himself didn't think he had the technical ability to be a good writer, but he tells a good story, which is the key element of any good book. *Of Human Bondage* was finally published in 1915 and to this day remains one of the most popular and best-selling novels by an English author.

***The Course of Love: A Novel*, by Alain de Botton (2016)**

This is de Botton's second novel, following his first success, *How Proust Can Change Your Life: Not a Novel* (1997). As a philosopher, writer, editor, and journalist, he has been compared to Julian Barnes, Woody Allen, and Donald Barthelme, all both smart and ironic. De Botton is also a founding member of The School of Life in London and a new institution, Living Architecture.

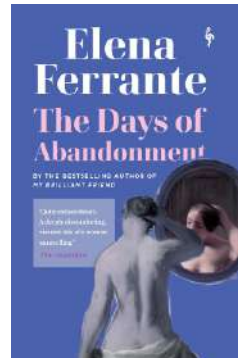


This novel, which received rave reviews, follows the life of a married couple from first passion through the predictable challenging years that come. It is a truly Romantic novel, exploring the longevity of love over a lifetime.

According to *The New York Times*, “*The Course of Love* is a return to the form that made Mr. de Botton's name in the mid-1990s ... Love is the subject best suited to his obsessive aphorizing, and in this novel he again shows off his ability to pin our hopes, methods, and insecurities to the page.”

***Days of Abandonment*, by Elena Ferrante, published in 2005**

For me, this novel evoked an intensity of emotion more pronounced even than Ferrante's famed quartet, *The Neapolitan Novels*. The pain and subsequent actions of the “abandoned” protagonist are impeccably portrayed. Shocking but understandable. Is she unreasonable or incredibly sane? You decide.

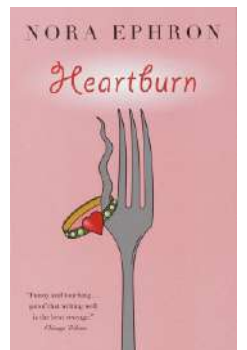


Ferrante remains voluntarily sequestered from publicity in the noble attempt to attract readers based on the quality of the writing rather than publicist hype. I hope her identity remains a secret, as it adds another layer of enchantment to her books.

Another of her noted books, *The Lost Daughter* (2008), has been made into a movie directed by and starring Maggie Gyllenhaal; it is available on Netflix.

***Heartburn*, by Nora Ephron (1983)**

The always-entertaining Nora Ephron brought us hours of poignant laughter during her career as a writer and observer of our times. In *Heartburn*, a novel based on her tumultuous marriage to and break-up with political journalist Carl Bernstein, she expertly blends a range of emotions expressing her state of being with a variety of recipes.



Adam Gopnik speculated in *The New Yorker* on her decision to include recipes: “In *Heartburn*, the recipes serve both as a joke about what a food writer writing a novel would write and as a joke on novel-writing itself by someone who anticipates that she will not be treated as a ‘real’ novelist.”

Ephron has a talent for converting the apparently tragic to the absurdly comic.

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love, by Raymond Carver (1981)

Not a novel, but the short stories in this collection are among the classics in modern literature. The title of the collection is also the title of one of the stories. You may recognize this title from Alejandro González Iñárritu's 2014 film *Birdman*, in which the central character is an old Hollywood actor who is mounting a Broadway play named for and based on Carver's story.

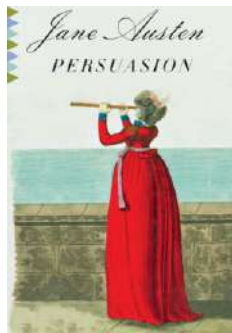
Carver is consistently praised by critics for his succinctness and veracity and for his ability to relate a broad range of emotion in few words. These stories about love pass the test of time.



Persuasion, by Jane Austen (1818, published posthumously)

A somewhat different twist on unrequited love in this, the last of Jane Austen's six published novels.

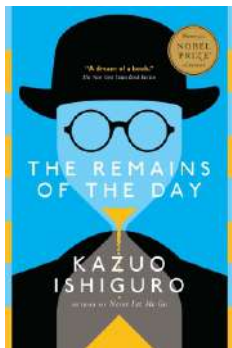
In this one the protagonist, Anne Elliott, discards her love interest based on some rather bad advice from a friend, an action she lives to regret. It all turns out well in the end, as do a majority of Austen's novels, most of which include some form of love gone wrong.



The Remains of the Day, by Kazuo Ishiguro (1989)

"Singular, intelligent, and beautiful" are words that have been used to describe this Booker-Prize-winning novel by Ishiguro, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017. The praise is well deserved, and this book in particular is a favorite among readers.

The heartbreaking story of a butler in post-WWII Britain who receives a letter from the housekeeper of two decades past, this short book is filled with the ambience of the period, and of the war with its fascist-sympathizing aristocrats. But the story that moves the narrative is that of the relationship between butler and housekeeper, and the regret of unrequited love.



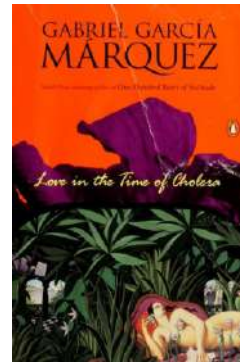
In 1993, the book was made into a popular movie starring Antony Hopkins and Emma Thompson.



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Love in the Time of Cholera, by Gabriel García Márquez (1985, Spanish; 1988, English)

Another winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (in 1982) graces this list. Márquez hails from Colombia, where he had homes in both Bogotá and Cartagena, in addition to Paris and Mexico City, where he died in 2014. During his long life, he not only wrote novels, he also studied law and was a journalist. Márquez also was a friend to many famous people and politicians, including Fidel Castro.



The love story of Florentino and Fermina in *Love in the Time of Cholera* spans a lifetime and is one of Marquez's most beloved novels, demonstrating that over the years love is not fluid, but ever changing.

Magical realism (the mixture of fantasy and fact) permeates his creations. In his own words, Márquez tells us, "In Mexico, Surrealism runs through the streets. Surrealism comes from the reality of Latin America."

Márquez was influenced by many other writers, among them Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, and especially William Faulkner. In the 1960s, Márquez lived in the *colonia* San Ángel in Mexico City, where he wrote his famed *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967).

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Spirit of Art 2022

By Tirza Bonifazi

Spirit of Art 2022 is officially HAPPENING. The second edition of Spirit of Art will be hosted at the Hotel Eden Costa, thanks to the support of entrepreneur Juan Benito García, who invested in the establishment to make it the first Art Boutique Hotel in Huatulco. And what better way to inaugurate his venture, than a collaborative art exhibit?

Four of the pieces that are being shown this year are actually part of Eden Costa, and are the murals of Mexican artists Irving Cano, Edna Guzmán, and Rafael Ortega. But art will flow throughout the property featuring the work of more than 15 artists, between national and international figures coming from different parts of the world.

Also, this year Spirit of Art is having an extra exhibition inside the exhibition. Through the "Exposición de Arte Emocional para niñas y niños" we're showing the 30 best pieces of art made by kids from Huatulco and Santa María Huatulco, who have been invited to participate through a call made in collaboration with DIF Municipal. The artworks are for sale - half of the proceeds of each piece will go to the kid artist, and the other half to DIF Municipal.



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Mexico's New National Guard

By Randy Jackson

To some of us regular visitors to Mexico who have been away for a long pandemic year, the appearance of the National Guard (*Guardia Nacional*), around Huatulco and elsewhere is new. And, although a National Guard is new in Mexico, their appearance is just the latest chapter in Mexico's journey to create an effective national law enforcement agency.

Mexican Policing: Preventive and Investigative

For most of modern Mexican history, there hasn't been a federal police force (except for the Federal Highway Patrol and the Federal Fiscal Police). During the 71 years the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) ran Mexico, the government used the military for internal security and any federal police action deemed necessary. Law enforcement was (and is) largely the responsibility of state governments. Most criminal offenses, including capital crimes, are handled by state authorities. But drug trafficking, in particular, is a federal offence, one that requires significant national resources to combat. As drug trafficking and organized crime have increased in Mexico, each new federal administration has shifted its approach to national law enforcement. The latest of these shifts has established the Guardia Nacional.

An important distinction in understanding policing in Mexico is the difference between the *preventive police* and the *judicial, or investigative, police*. Preventive police are the most visible. They are uniformed officers, typically heavily armed and highly visible on the streets. Their role at the municipal, state and federal levels is to prevent and respond to crime. They do not have the authority or training to investigate crimes. Criminal investigation and arrests under a warrant are handled by the judicial police at the state and federal levels. These investigative police have separate command structures reporting to the office of the Attorney General.

The vast majority of Mexico's police force is preventive (this would include all the municipal police). At the federal level, this type of policing can easily be accomplished by military forces. Any additional training for the military to perform a preventive police role would be minimal, with men, weapons and equipment readily available. The military was the go-to organization in national police actions for all Mexican presidents up to, and including, President Ernesto Zedillo (1994 - 2000). Zedillo undertook the first major police reform in Mexico. This included steps towards an overall coordination of state and national police policy and strategy. He also initiated the first *Policía Federal Preventiva* (Federal Preventive Police) force by enhancing some powers of the Mexican Highway Patrol.



The Need for National-Level Policing

Under the Presidency of Vicente Fox (2000 - 06), the need for a civilian-led national security force was recognized, but as the first non-PRI president in 71 years, President Fox was up against long-embedded PRI institutions, notably the military. The main activity of the Mexican military since its inception (1913) has been internal security. Fox's administration recognized that his 6-year term would be insufficient to establish a new federal police force from the ground up, so it pursued a hybrid solution. The *Policía Federal Preventiva* was supplemented by 7,500 troops from the military police brigade and the Navy's infantry. To complement this federal preventive force, President Fox introduced a new institution intended to be similar to the American FBI. This new agency was called *Agencia Federal de Investigación*, or AFI. This force was to be a federal professional police service centred on a technical and scientific approach to policing.

Although President Fox's initiatives never took hold, they set up the next administration, that of Felipe Calderón (2006 - 12), to make a serious attempt at creating a federal police force. By the time Calderón came to power, there had been a sizable increase in the

organization, violence and criminal audacity of the cartels. Because it was recognized the cartels had significantly infiltrated civilian police services, Calderón ordered a full-scale assault on the cartels by the military, largely headed by the Naval Marines.

While the cartel assault was going on, Calderón's administration initiated significant reforms to the federal, state, and municipal police services in Mexico. His administration pursued civilian oversight, evaluation and qualification of officers, higher recruitment standards, funding for municipal and state forces, and a national police database. He also sought to transfer the investigative police powers to the preventive police. These steps, along with criminal justice reform, had some but not widespread success.

Under the Calderón administration, the *Policía Federal Preventiva* was dramatically expanded in numbers, up to 35,000 in 2012, and was renamed *Policía Federal*. This new force absorbed the investigative division, the AFI, and had its own intelligence gathering. It was also substantially equipped to near military capability including Black Hawk helicopters and surveillance aircraft. This in large part was due to funding from the United States under the Mérida Initiative, an agreement between Felipe Calderón and President George W. Bush to aid Mexico (and Latin America) in fighting organized crime (this agreement was cancelled under the current AMLO administration).

A New Idea for the National Police

In 2012, the Mexican people returned the PRI to power under President Enrique Peña Nieto (2012 – 18). President Peña Nieto continued with many of the reforms to police services introduced by his predecessor, but his strategy towards a federal police force was very different. His plan was to follow the Colombia model for a national police service. He introduced a plan to develop a national gendarmerie, which has much in common with the community policing arms of American police forces. The *División de Gendarmería de la Policía Federal* was to be a middle force between the police and military, where a lighter armed military force would be appropriately trained for civilian law enforcement. The plan called for 40,000 members by 2018.

Against considerable opposition, the Gendarmería was created in 2014 with just 5,000 officers. Throughout the remaining term of the Peña Nieto administration, this force never got off the ground. At the same time the numbers of federal police, fraught with corruption scandals and desertions, declined to just 4,500 members.

This dramatic decline in the numbers of the Policía Federal was countered by the Army's Military Police. By 2015 the *Heroico Colegio Militar* (the Army's military academy) began training officers for a new national military police force with a goal to have 36,000 officers by 2018. After 20 years of initiatives and reforms attempting to establish a citizen-led national police force, the Mexican military was again fully in charge of national policing.

From Policía Federal to Guardia Nacional

The final blow to the Federal Police was delivered by the current president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). In his first year in office (2018) he abolished the Federal Police. President Obrador established the National Guard to be a new, non-military, national law enforcement agency.

The National Guard is a gendarmerie-style force (i.e., has community, police and military features). It was established as the fourth military force in Mexico, alongside the Army, Navy and Air Force. The creation of a national guard is allowed under the 1917 constitution, which stated it must be "civilian in nature." AMLO's stated intent is to transition the National Guard from a military organization to a civilian organization over time. The National Guard reports to a civilian secretariat.

The first phase of the development of the National Guard was to absorb the army's military police, which had expanded under the previous administration. They would then expand further using military personnel who wished to transfer to the National Guard. Then the National Guard would eventually seek up to 50,000 civilians to join their ranks. There are currently 90,000 members of the National Guard.

The central objective for the National Guard is to support public security tasks in coordination with state and municipal authorities. The assigned responsibilities of the National Guard are extremely wide in scope, including preventive policing, investigative policing, civil protection in disasters and crises, kidnapping resolution, criminal surveillance, intelligence gathering, border protection and detaining undocumented migrants, and many other responsibilities. The National Guard would be assigned less lethal (semi-automatic) weapons and would support, but not lead, military special forces operations.

On May 11, 2020, under an executive decree, the National Guard (along with the other military branches), was given the same powers as the state and municipal police forces. This enables them to detain suspects and carry out arrest warrants. The Mexican military has never before had these powers.

One newsworthy use of the National Guard to date has been their deployment to Mexico's north and south borders to control illegal migrants seeking to enter the United States. Under the threat by President Trump to impose high tariffs on Mexican goods, AMLO deployed 15,000 National Guard troops to the border areas. This has greatly reduced the flow of Latin American migrants to the US.

So the deployment, the role, and the success of the National Guard in federal policing of Mexico, remains a story in progress. A story some of us armchair (should that be beach chair?) observers will be following with interest.

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Marriage in Mexico

By Kary Vannice

For the most part, people in developed countries still see Mexico as a third-world or developing country. In most parts of the world, Mexico has a reputation for being behind the curve when it comes to business and technology and behind the times when it comes to modern cultural mores.

Even for those of us who choose to live here in Mexico, we, too, often fall into the trap of thinking that Mexico lags far behind our countries of origin, where we like to think morality and equality are more favored. Which is why you might be surprised to learn that Mexico, in general, is quite progressive when it comes to the subject of marriage.

Underage Marriage

In 2019, the Mexican Senate issued a total ban on underage marriage without parental consent, meaning that no person under the age of 18 could marry without permission. Before that, the legal age for marriage was 14 for girls and 16 for boys. Now, no person younger than that can marry, even with parental consent.

If you're thinking, "That doesn't sound progressive at all!" or "Why did it take Mexico so long to take action to protect underage girls and boys?", consider that Massachusetts, in the United States, has a minimum marriage age with parental consent of 14 years old for boys and 12 years old for girls. In New Hampshire, it's 14 for males and 13 for females, and both Mississippi and California have no minimum age at all, as long as there is parental consent.

Same-Sex Marriage

Now, consider that Mexico City also became one of the first jurisdictions to legalize same-sex marriage, all the way back in 2009. When looking at a global same-sex marriage legalization timeline, you'll find this legislation sandwiched right between Norway and Sweden, two countries that are arguably considered to be among the most progressive in the world. In North America, Canada led the way back in 2005, with its legislation of the Civil Marriage Act. And the United States lagged far behind both. It was not until 2015 that the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, making same-sex marriages legal in all 50 states. Same-sex unions in Mexico also enjoy all of the same legal rights as heterosexual couples.



Religious vs. Civil Unions

Interestingly, in a country where 72% of residents identify as Catholic, and only about 15% identify as having no religious affiliation at all, only civil ceremonies are recognized as legal in Mexico. Religious weddings are seen as symbolic only and are not recognized by law. Most couples wishing to marry in the church have a civil service performed at a local municipality before they tie the knot at the church.

Divorce

Divorce has been legal in Mexico for over a century. In contrast, Italy didn't legalize divorce until 1977. It took Ireland two more decades, until 1997. And Chile even more recently legalized divorce in 2004.

Just a few years after that, in 2008, Mexico City approved unilateral divorce (meaning one spouse could file for divorce without the consent of the other), and other states in Mexico quickly followed suit. Today there are three types of divorce in Mexico, and either spouse can legally file for divorce.

Mexico, unlike many other countries, has kept the legalities of civil unions largely on the side of civil government and kept it out of the realm of religious wedlock, which is one of the main reasons why they have always been ahead of the curve compared to other predominantly Catholic countries.

You do not have to be a resident to be legally married in Mexico. Many foreigners wed each year in Mexico. Prenuptial agreements are legal and upheld by law in Mexico. In the future, you can expect Mexico to be at or near the leading edge when it comes to legal rights around marriage.

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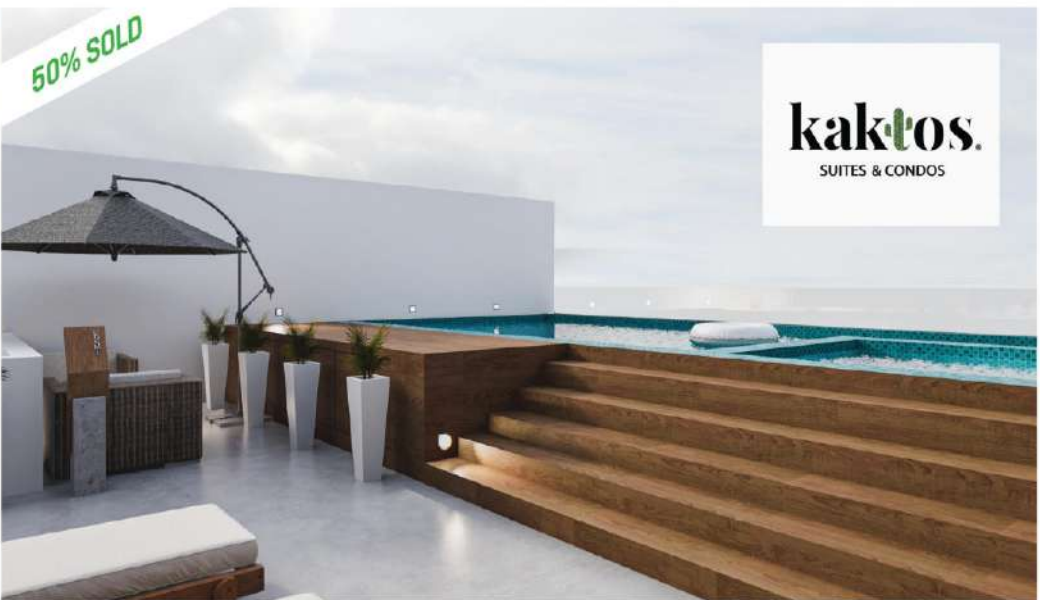
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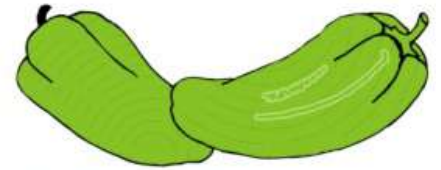
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- Mezcal Margarita

THURSDAY- Wild Card

Contact us to find out the days' menu. This class is about fun and experimentation!

FRIDAY- Street Food

- Red and Green Salsas
- Pico de Gallo
- Handmade Tortillas and Sopes
- 2 types of Taco Fillings
- Tlayudas
- Jamaica Margaritas

Fodor'sTravel

FRIDAY- NIGHT

Village to Table Dinner

Our 8-course dinner using local ingredients is a culinary experience not to be missed!

*This is not a cooking class



Chiles&Chocolate Cooking Classes offer delicious culinary and cultural experiences that explore Mexican cuisine. Our hands-on classes ensure you will leave prepared to recreate the dishes when you get home.

- Hands-on
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- Recipe Manual
- Free Gift Bag
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