



Free

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HUGS AND KISSES

This is a perfect subject for Valentine's Day! Americans, Canadians and Northern Europeans seem to avoid physical contact as much as possible in their daily routines except for handshakes and an occasional hug. Cold fish I've heard them called. Southern Europeans and Latin Americans, on the other hand, are constantly touching, hugging and kissing, physical contact being an important expression of affection and friendship.

When Mexican women meet they normally shake hands or merely nod in recognition, however, the French import of kissing or touching each cheek as become quite popular here.

When Mexican male friends meet they can either just shake hands or do a combination handshake, embrace with two pats on the back and another handshake. Handshakes also vary. There is the usual one which we know or if you're really close friends this handshake proceeds into a grasping of the thumb, which can be a surprise if you're not expecting it. Mexicans are also very expressive with both children and older relatives and other members of the family. You will also notice that there is a lot of hugging and kissing going on in doorways and parks. There is a reason for this. It is not customary for romantic liaisons or courtships to be carried on at home. Lovers usually meet somewhere, usually outside near the girl's home.

There really isn't any set rule for all this physical interchange. Just be observant and you'll learn what to do.

ton

Have a happy valentine's day !



Ethnic Groups: THE IXCATECOS



The Ixcatecos live in Ixcatlan and are the last survivors of what were originally seven townships. Located in the northern part of the State of Oaxaca, it is one of the poorest regions in the entire republic.

The air is very dry and the temperature is always in the low 60's. Torrential rains fall in the spring and summer and the rapid runoff makes the land even dryer. The only plant that thrives in this infertile land is the palm tree and the inhabitants produce such articles as hats, fans, and baskets, etc., which has been their main source of

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income since the 18th century. The flora here used to be abundant but due to erosion it has all but disappeared. In 1950 there were 922 inhabitants and this increased to only 1,079 by 1981. Malnutrition and lack of opportunity have forced many to leave the region. Outside influences have corrupted the Ixcateco language and only 186 people can speak it in its purest form, Spanish now being the primary language. The most important holiday for the Ixcatecos is May 7th, which is the celebration of "Señor de las Tres Caidas" their Patron Saint.

Oaxacan Personages:

RODOLFO MORALES



The life of Rodolfo Morales, the Oaxacan artist, has been a series of drastic changes. Born in the small town of Ocotlan de Morelos to a Zapotec family of modest means, he started his career experimenting with pencil rather than paint, not only because it was less expensive, but because he felt that being an artist was something very strange.

Leaving his native town to study art for 6 years at the prestigious Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City, he never dreamed he would become a well known, accepted, successful artist because in those days to achieve this you had to be an Orozco or a Rivera or someone who copied their styles.

His success as an artist was assured after an extremely successful show in Cuernavaca in 1975, and this success and acceptance has increased ever since then. When asked what artists had the most influence on his life and his style, he is quick to mention Maria Izquierdo and Manuel Rodriguez Lozano.

He has helped and continues to help serious young art students but is disappointed that many of these think only of the present and for quick money sell out to the many art galleries who are constantly clamouring for new work. He feels that as a result they will never be able to achieve their maximum potential as artists.

Rodolfo thrives on long hours, discipline and dedication and does not relax waiting for inspiration. This hard work, he believes, is the basis of his success and the popularity of his work.

A dream came true when he was able to afford to buy a beautiful, huge colonial house in Ocotlan now decorated with his own art and that of his fellow painters. A huge open patio, stained glass windows and other carefully selected antiques make it the perfect setting for entertaining his friends and enjoying all that life has to offer.

MEXICAN CURRENCY

Congratulations, now you're a millionaire! You've just changed US\$500 into Mexican pesos and you have a great big pile of different colored bills and large heavy assorted coins sitting in front of you. Is it monopoly money? How long will it last?

The answers are "no" and "¿Quién sabe?"

First the coins. Because of inflation small denomination coins are practically worthless but are still in circulation. Some stores still give exact change while others don't bother and round it off to the nearest 50 pesos. Here is the coinage breakdown:

1	peso
5	"
10	"
20	"
50	"
100	"
200	"
500	"
1000	"
5000	"

Of the above the 50, 100, 500 & 1000 peso coins are the most popular and useful. The 200 peso coin is too much like the 500 peso coin but thicker and heavier. The 5000 peso coin, like the 500, is silver in color, but larger and heavier, don't confuse them.

The breakdown for paper money is:

1000	pesos
2000	"
5000	"
10000	"
20000	"
50000	"

The 5, 10, & 20000 pesos bills are the most practical for every day spending. The 1000 peso bill is usually dirty and ragged. Change is a problem in Oaxaca and therefore the 50000 peso bills are usually in almost mint condition. It's best to request 10 & 20000 peso bills at the bank because you will have a problem with 50000 peso bills changewise. Please be sure and spend it all before you leave!

tod



RODOLFO MORALES with some students of the ICC, Martha Bennetts a spanish teacher of our Institute and Yolanda Garcia publisher of the Times.

Oaxaca through the eyes of an English artist

OAXACA is the title chosen by Martin Wild a painter from England, for his exhibition of oil painting, watercolors and pastel drawings on show at the Museum of Oaxaca from February 17 to March 16. The title is appropriate as it is a kind of record of his experience of six months stay here.

Most of the work on show is drawn directly from observation and probably focuses on things that might interest the visitor more than the local, and in particular for him, the intensely blue skies. You will be familiar with some of the views depicted, others you will be unlikely to have been lucky enough to stumble across, including, of course, some drawings of neighbors and plants in the village he is living in. This is a bright exhibition, full of variety and well worth a visit.

WE HAVE THE PESOS IF YOU HAVE THE TIME OR THE SAD SAGA OF MONEY EXCHANGE

It's amazing to me how difficult Mexican banks in Oaxaca make it for a tourist to change dollars into pesos. For a long time a visit to the dentist was something I dreaded, now it's a visit to the bank. The hours for the operation vary (usually 9-11 or 9-12:30), the lines, at times, are unbelievably long, and only certain banks seem to be involved in the money exchange business, and some of these will only accept travellers checks, no cash. Others have a limit on how many dollars you may exchange per transaction. Why is this? Is it the latin love of red tape? Is it a system which hasn't adjusted to the growing influx of tourists, which will only increase in the coming years due to the development of the coastal areas of Huatulco and Puerto Escondido? Is it because the banks are nationalized and that service and efficiency have all but evaporated?

All of the above! One of the biggest problems seems to be lack of training. Evidently each employee is trained to do one specific job only. Walk into any Mexican bank and you will see 50 people lined up in front of one cashier while the others have none. Instead of jumping in and helping out they just sit there chatting or doing their nails. Another thing is that each bank has it's own procedures for changing money, which is o.k. but some of them are undogly



inefficient. For example (I won't mention names) in one bank you must stand in line to see a clerk seated at a desk. There you must, in the case of travellers checks, write your home address, passport or tourist visa number and your address while staying in Mexico. Suppose I lie? Who will know the difference. Then the clerk opens your passport and looks

at the picture to make sure you're really you. Let's face it, how many people travel all the way to Oaxaca with forged passports trying to cash stolen or bogus traveller's checks? Give me a break! After this you are given a chit and must go to yet another line to wait again until you finally reach the counter to get your money. In the meantime several people will muscle their way to the front of the line which is always tolerated by the cashier for some unknown reason. Ridiculous? You bet! The quickest way, if you don't mind losing approximately 100 pesos on the dollar, is to go to an exchange house, of which there are several in the city. There is no hassle and you can be out of there in 5 minutes. tod

The Weather in February

We call it "Crazy February" because some days it will be windy, some days warm and some days cool. In other words "unpredictable". Banks will be closed on Feb 5. As of Feb 1st, BANAMEX will be open from 9-1:30 and from 4-6:00 p.m. Foreign currency exchange will be transacted in the morning only.

February 24th is *fiag* Day.




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RESTAURANT ALAMEDA

Butter is not usually found on the average Mexican table and is rarely served in restaurants unless they cater to tourists. Restaurant Alameda, Calle J.P. Garcia #202, only 2 blocks west of the Zocalo, has few foreign diners and that is a pity. Consisting of 2 large dining rooms and a covered central patio, it is one of the nicer places in town. Simply elegant, the service is about the most professional I've seen here. Open until 6 p.m. (closed Tuesdays) lunch only is served. They have a complete menu, feature an excellent "comida corrida" at about 12,000 pesos (higher on Sundays) and have other daily specials. The live organ music tends to be a loud if you sit in the patio. Extremely popular on Sundays with families, the Alameda offers excellent food at reasonable prices and has a nice convivial atmosphere. tod

XOCHITL SOUP

Here is the recipe for a robust, easy to prepare, very nourishing soup served in many of Oaxaca's leading restaurants. As a light supper it's ideal, and with a salad it makes a complete meal.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

- 6 cups water
- 6 tsp chicken stock/base
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 4 half chicken breasts
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tomatos, diced
- 2 avocados, peeled and diced
- 2 serrano chiles, finely chopped
- ½ bunch cilantro leaves, chopped

PREPARATION

In a dutch oven or soup pot with cover add water and bring to a boil. Add stock, stir, add rice stir again. Quickly add chicken cover, reduce flame to low and simmer for ½ hr. Off flame. Remove chicken. When cool remove skin and bones and discard. Shred chicken and return to pot. Bring soup to simmer, add onion tomato, avocado, chiles and half the cilantro. When bubbly ladle into soup bowls, garnish with remaining cilantro and serve. Enjoy!

Bienvenidos amigos

Welcome, reader, to the OAXACA, TIMES. Oaxaca, is a beautiful, clean, colonial city with friendly people and a nearly perfect climate. OAXACA TIMES aims to provide you, the English-speaking visitor, with valuable information which will enhance and enrich your stay. Write, call (6-34-43), or come by our office (Guerrero 311) with your tips and recommendations about Oaxaca. Our office is 2 1/2 blocks east of the Zocalo at the Institute of Communication and culture, A.C. Come by and get acquainted. But, above all, enjoy our beautiful Oaxaca.

Yolanda Garcia C.
Publisher

MALE FASHIONS IN OAXACA



Middle and upper class Mexican boys dress exactly like teenagers the world over. You could drop one off in New York or London and no one would turn a head. Oversized T-shirts with an endless variety of logos, sloppy sweat shirts, klunky-looking athletic shoes and acid dyed jeans compose the ideal wardrobe. You can even spot an earring and punk hairdo now and then along with those cod-piece looking money belts which loop around the waist. This comfortable if not elegant mode lasts well into their early twenties when they graduate from school and enter the business world.

Now the picture changes dramatically. Suddenly vanity and body awareness take hold. Now we see pleated contour shirts with the first top 3 buttons open displaying much chest and a variety of gold chains. Tight trousers enter the picture, and I emphasize

TIGHT! Italian style leather loafers complete the outfit.

It's the peacock syndrome! By their late 40's, older, wiser and somewhat stouter, comfort finally returns. Now we see loose fitting, easy to wear guayaberas coupled with easy-to-sit-down-in, I-don't-have-to-hold-my-breath-any-more slacks. Light weight suits and jackets are also seen. It's the whole cycle and when you think about it, not unlike the rest of the world.

DAY DREAMING

I'd like to spend some time in Oaxaca
Swinging in a hamaca
or perhaps
in Puerto Escondido
under a palapa
Maybe in Tlaxiaco
trying to get flaco
or go to Tlacolula
and dance the hula
I'll get my fill of
booze in Salina Cruz
and discover a
shipwreck off the
coast of Tehuantepec
Oh heck, maybe I'm
just day dreaming
and will have to
return to Cleveland
screaming!

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