

2nd ANIVERSARY ISSUE

Oaxaca Times

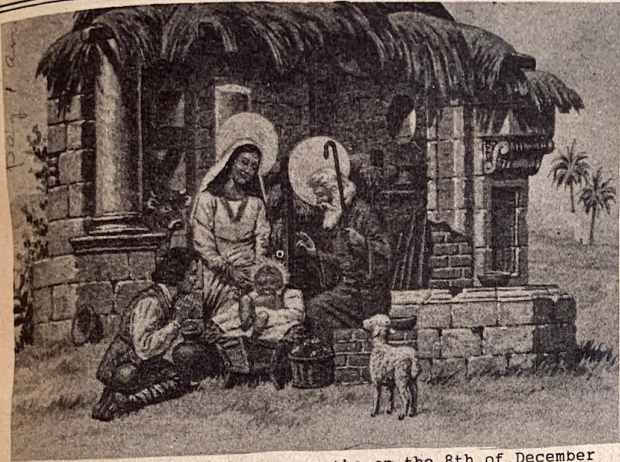
Oaxaca's English Tourist Newspaper

Vol.2 # 24

OAXACA, OAX.

DECEMBER 1990

Christmas Magic in Oaxaca



The December celebrations start on the on the 8th of December with the Virgin of the Conception festival. All girls named Conception (conchita) will be celebrating their saints day. Religious services will be held at the Compania Church, or if you go to San Juanito town, a 10 minutes bus ride from the center of the city, you'll find an interesting fair and lots of food! For some people, Christmas is only an expensive holiday or an excuse for a family reunion.

As a Oaxaqueña myself, I would like to explain that Christmas, and, actually the entire month of December, is for those of us who live here, a very special and important time of the year. Oaxaca is known all over the world for the celebrations that occur here each december.

Each of the sixteen ethnic groups, including the Zapotecs who live in the valley of Oaxaca, join in the December celebrations. Almost no one expects presents or is even thinking about buying them. Christmas month is a time for sharing the good times and the bad times, the good and the not so good memories.

It's also a time for sharing the fiesta spirit with all of you!

On the 10th of December, between 8 and 10 p.m. , a calenda (religious parade) announces the upcoming celebrations of the Virgin of Guadalupe. you can wait to see it around the Zócalo of course!

On the 12th get up early and have breakfast in the street in front of the Guadalupe Church. Many Oaxacans go there and they'll have tamales, atole, enchiladas.memelitas etc.

On December 16th, the Calenda of the patron saint of the Oaxaqueños, the Virgen of the Solitude. You can join the celebrations in the Zocalo.

Then on the 17th fire works in front of the Soledad Basilica. On the 18th go again and have breakfast, listen to different bands from various regions of the State and enjoy the fair. From the 16th to the 24th, enjoy the posadas! posadas are small processions made up of groups of families and friends, who, with lighted candles, parade singing and laughing to the home of a friend. The after a greeting song everyone is admitted for food and other refreshment. If you are lucky enough to be invited to participate in a posada, do it! It can be a refreshing and rewarding experience in indescribable ways.

Also during the 16th to the 31st you can view and sample the buñuelos in front of the Cathedral. The buñuelos are large thin flour tortillas splashed or soaked in a special ayrup made out of molasses, a classical christmas dessert. Be sure to break the plate.

It's believed that the tradition of breaking the plates after eating buñuelos originated with the Aztecs.



The custom is based on the legend of Aztec emperor Moctezuma, who is said to have refused to eat more than once from the same plate. His royal status entitled him to do as he wished.

Those who currently follow the custom may be savoring a taste of the royal experience.

23rd Night of the Radishes. A very unique contest in which the Oaxacan artisans build fantastic scenes and sculptures out of radishes.

Please see Oaxaca on page 6

Enjoy learning SPANISH

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SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS .



Among the long list of little known contributions Mexico has made to the world, are certain foods and flowers which are used in Christmas celebrations everywhere.

PAVO

Early in the 16th Century, the emperor Moctezuma lived in great splendor. As a special treat, Moctezuma dined on the Hueyxtotl bird. Hueyxtotls, also known as guajolotes, totoles, còconos, pavos, or turkeys have been an indispensable part of special Christmas dishes in Mexico ever since. Turkeys were exported to Europe by the Spanish conquistadores and evidence of the spread of the popularity of the bird can be found on dinner tables at christmas and other days of celebration all over the globe.

CHOCOLATE

Cocoa beans, grown in Mexico only in the states of Tabasco and Chiapas, were so valuable they were used as money by the Olmecs, the Chontales, the Aztecs the Zapotecs and many other pre-hispanic societies. The beans were of course, also used to concoct the ever popular beverage, hot chocolate. The spanish conquistadores developed a special fondness for chocolate and shipped enormous quantities of the beans back to Europe. In many parts of the world, Christmas is celebrated with special treats made with chocolate.

In Mexico, there are bombones, turrones, confites, pasteles and postres, to name a few.

CACAHUATES

The cacahuate (peanut) is a necessary part of the contents of Christmas piñatas: colorful goodie-filled paper creations of all shapes and sizes which are hung above the heads of eager children who try and bash the goodies out with the help of long sticks and gravity. As you probably already know, cacahuates are rich in vitamins (and calories) and are important ingredient in many types of Christmas confections, world-wide.

Flor de Navidad

The flower of Christmas or "nochebuena" was adopted by the Mexicanos especially for the festivities of Christmas to decorate the "Nacimientos" Nativity scene at the beginning of the 17th century. A couple of centuries later, a Northamerican diplomat and a fond of botany Mr. Joel Poinsett, classified the flower and created a world-wide attention on the "flor de Navidad" or "Poinsettia".



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HOW TO CHOOSE A LANGUAGE SCHOOL

In the wintertime there seem to be a lot of schools offering Spanish classes to foreigners. Beware ! many of these schools are out to make a fast money. low prices do not necessarily mean quality education. When choosing a school, be sure to select one where teachers are university trained to teach Spanish as a second language.

In Mexico university degrees are very much a status symbol but having a degree in foreign affairs chemistry or anthropology does not qualify one to teach Spanish. The Institute of Communication and Culture meets all the requirements for quality education at a fair price. Please contact us at 6-3443 or visit our school at M. BRAVO # 210



Look son, at how much progress the world has made! When I was young, this boulevard was only a narrow path.....



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AVOID LONG BANK LINES

The Magic Kings

There is presently a currency shortage in Mexico...so, if you don't plan well, you could spend a great deal more time than you'd like just standing in line at a bank, waiting to change money.

Most banks accept foreign currency and travelers checks only during certain hours and they have limits on the amounts they will exchange.

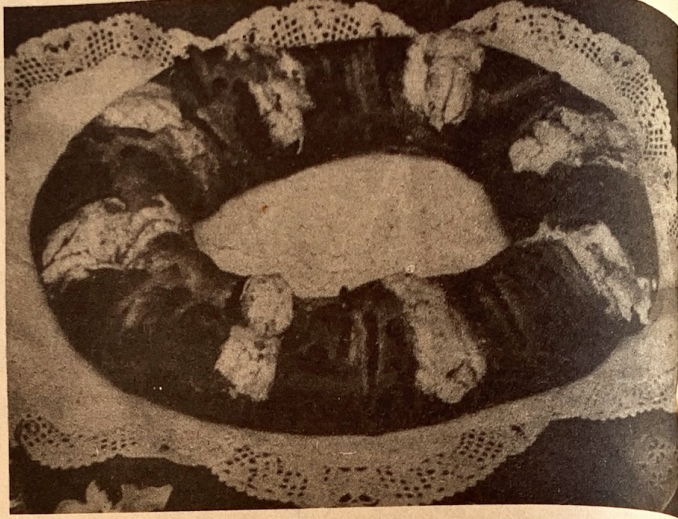
Cash advances (money you can obtain using your credit cards) are available at many banks.

For any of the bank transactions listed above, take your passport, tourist card or visa, and, of course, your credit card if you're planning to get a cash advance.

(Visa and Mastercard are the two credit cards accepted by the banks.)

Both Banamex and Bancomer offer automatic teller machines. You can use your Visa or Mastercard to obtain pesos quickly if you know your P.I.N. code number. These automatic tellers are connected to a master computer which connects banks from all over the world. Your personal account will be automatically debited in the currency of your country of origin. The minimum withdrawal from the machines is 100,000 pesos for international travelers and 50,000 for national cardholders. The maximum withdrawal depends on the personal credit limit permitted by your bank. The automatic tellers are open 24 hours, 7 days a week. Use the imprinted code (a holographic image) on the credit card itself to open the door to the machines.

If you need a cash advance but do not use the automatic teller machines, it is sometimes necessary to ask inside the bank to see the bank's credit manager: "Gerente de Tarjetas de Credito."



Every year in some way or another on the 6th of January, the Catholic world celebrates the festival of the Three Kings. Early in the morning, the three kings bring gifts to the children. Everyone participates in the day's celebrations and a special cake, called "Ring Cake" is an important part of the festivities. A small plastic figure of the baby Jesus is often hidden inside each cake.

There probably isn't a single company, laboratory or business that doesn't share one of these cakes. Sometimes the employees themselves all contribute to the purchase of the cake. When the cake is divided and served, everyone becomes a bit nervous.... because the recipient of the slice of cake containing the tiny plastic figure is compelled to sponsor a party on the second day of february, "Candlemas Day". Candlemas Day is the day that Catholic Church officially closes the Christmas cycle.

Please see Avoid on page 6



Sign up NOW for "A TASTE OF OAXACA" COOKING CLASSES!

Three hour lessons every Tue and Thur. from 9am - Noon. \$15. U.S. per session. Learn to prepare (then taste!) delectable traditional Oaxaqueño cuisine.

Call 6-34-43 to sign up, or for more info.



The Institute of Communication and culture is staffed by an excellent group of dedicated faculty and staff. They are experienced professionals especially prepared to teach our innovative and dynamic language program. You will find no better conditions where you can absorb the Mexican Culture and the Spanish language more successfully than when you come and live with a Oaxacan family that has been carefully screened. The Institute starts a new course every monday year-round.

Application for Admission

Name _____ Date _____
(family) (first) (middle) (month day year)

Permanent address _____
(state) (zip) (country) (city) (telephone)

Marital Status: Married () Single () Sex: Male () Female ()

Date of birth _____ Occupation _____
Month day year

Native Language _____ Have you ever studied Spanish? _____ How long? _____ year

Present knowledge of Spanish: () none () poor () fair () good

When do you plan to begin? _____ How long do you plan to study? _____

How did you find out about I. C. C. _____

Would you like to live with a Mexican family? _____

Please sign here _____ Please send a current snapshot

Mailing address: 210 N. Bravo St. Oaxaca, Oax. 68000 Ph. (951) 634 43

Cultural Events

ART EXHIBITIONS

- 1-20 michele gibbs- Alianza Francesa-306 Morelos
- 1-31 roger von gunten-graphic arts institute-507 alcalá
- 1-30 joseph patrich-Museo de Oaxaca- 204 Alcalá
- 4 children from japan and Oaxaca-Opening reception
11 a.m.-204 Alcalá.
- 4-30 gaston de gives pineda-Museo de
8 p.m.204 Alcalá.
- 5-30 mexican stamps-Opening reception:
Oaxaca- 204 Alcalá

CULTURAL CENTER "FLORES MAGON"

Alcalá # 302 Ph.6-47-62

- 2-30 folk art from the coast of Oaxaca.
- 7 folk music- "Son Criollo group"-6 p.m.
- 13 new folk music-"Trova Cubana"- 8 p. m.
- 14-15 christmas concert- Quetzally group. 8 p.m.
- 16-22 christmas plays (pastorelas) 8 p.m.



other activities

- 12-13-14 pastorelas -In front of the Cathedral-6 p. m.
- 14 christmas carols -Same place as above- 6 p.m.
- 16 primavera orchestra- In front of the Cathedral
7p.m.
- 23 radishes night- Around the Zocalo- 7 p.m.
- 24 calendas night- Around the Zocalo- 9 p.m.

Oaxaca from page 1

On December 24th each Oaxacan church organizes a procession with music, floats, and crows bearing candles.

After the Calendas most families get together for a big dinner. They have another banquet on the 31st of december, New Years Eve, the wealthy and middle class usually serve turkey or ham or fish with various salads vegetables and the traditional buñelos. The poorer classes usually serve tamales and buñelos.

In the country it's even more simple. They may have barbecue cooked in the ground or sweet tamales with hot chocolate.

The 28th is Fools Day!!! don't let people fool you! They usually ask you for money or other things and you'll never get them back. Watch out if you hear someone say

" Inocente Palomita que te has dejado enganar si sabes que en este dia nada se debe prestar "

" Innocent little dove, now that you let me fool you, know that nothing is loaned on this day!"

Y.G.C.

OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GOOD FRIENDS AND READERS THAT KEEP US GOING.WE ARE TWO YEARS OLD NOW SO CHEERS TO YOU AND CHEERS TO ALL OF US!

THE OAXACA TIMES.

Avoid from page 4

Some of the banks near the zocalo are:

BANAMEX, Hidalgo #821, from 9-11 a.m. and 4-5 p.m.

BANCOMER, Garcia Vigil #120, from 9-11:30 a.m.

(You may find shorter lines inside at the Bancomer branch on Calle Miguel Cabrera, just past the Benito Juarez market.)

BANCA SERFIN, Independencia #705, from 10-12 a.m.

BANCA CONFIA, Hidalgo #513 at 20 de Noviembre, from 9-12 a.m.

If you have an American Express card, you can easily go to the local American Express office at Valdivieso #2 (at the northeast corner of the zocalo) to obtain pesos.

A Message to the Readers of
The Oaxaca Times
from the Office of the
Federal Director of
the Tourist Bureau

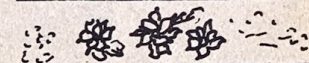
Esteemed Visitors:

We are pleased and proud to join in the celebration of the second anniversary of The Oaxaca Times, Oaxaca's first English-language newspaper.

Thanks to the efforts of the publisher, Sra. Yolanda Garcia Caballero and her staff, an important niche has been filled and a vehicle provided which enhances the city of Oaxaca's opportunities to share our enormous cultural richness with the rest of the world.

We hope that, as visitors to our beautiful and beloved city, you will have the opportunity to experience all the wonders of Oaxaca and that you will tell your friends and your families so that they, too, might appreciate our prehispanic legends, our colonial inheritance, the diversity of our artists and craftsmen, the richness of our cuisine, and the happiness and hospitality of the Oaxaqueño people in general.

Arturo Lopez Ramos
Director, Federal
Tourist Bureau



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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 H. BRAVO #210 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