

# Oaxaca Times

Oaxaca's Original English Tourist Newspaper

December 1994

Free

## The other Huatulco

Huatulco is the newest tourist destination on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Located in the state of Oaxaca, it lies 420 miles south of Mexico City and 150 miles from the city of Huatulco.

Chosen for development by the Mexican government for its numerous miles of pure white sands and palm tree covered beaches, Huatulco is scheduled to become the "the next Cancun", but it is in its initial phase of development. It has the assets of Cancun but without the drawbacks.

Huatulco is actually a series of 9 picturesque bays: Conejos, Tanguilunda, Chahue, Santa Cruz, Chacahua, Organo, Cacaluta, Chacahua and San Agustín. The sea is a transparent color of blue and green, pleasantly and the air is free of contamination as the area is almost entirely undeveloped. At present, only 2 bays, Tanguilunda and Santa Cruz, have any development at all. Tanguilunda bay is the location of the deluxe hotels, of which there are 7. Santa Cruz has 12 restaurants and 3 hotels, and there is an open air market for arts



Manzanillo beach

and crafts.

### HISTORY

As a result of the development of the Bays of Huatulco, as the area is known, recent archaeological excavations have revealed relics of ancient cultures. Ceramic artifacts from the Chontales indicate that the Huatulco area was inhabited as early as 1000 to 1200 A.D. and some of these artifacts can be found on excursions to the river Copalita.

Quetzalcoatl who instructed the local Zapotec Indians in Christianity and in worshipping a giant wooden cross that was planted in the sand on Santa Cruz beach.

According to that legend, in the late 16th century Huatulco was visited by Francis Drake and other English pirates.

**“ Legend tells us that many years before the Spanish conquest, Huatulco was visited by a bearded, robed white man identified by the natives as Quetzalcoatl. ”**

Although Drake did no damage, others after him destroyed the town but the cross remained standing.

Then, in 1587, Thomas

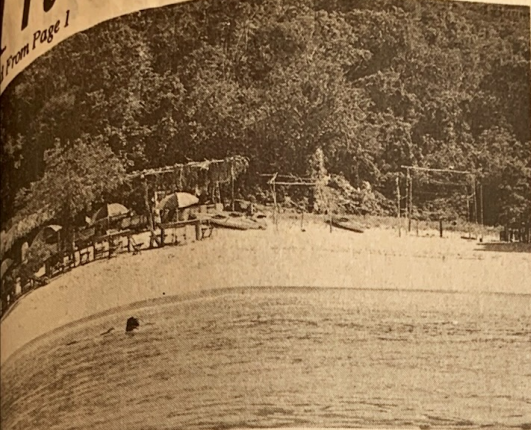
Cavendish tried in vain to hack it down with axes and pull it over with chains. Finally, in 1611, the Bishop of Oaxaca, Juan de Cervantes, ordered the miraculous cross to be dug up. On doing so, the base of the cross was revealed to be only a few feet deep, making its resistance to Cavendish's

The name Huatulco is derived from the zapotec "Cuauhxocho" that means "tree where the eagle stood on." and was founded in 1539. Legend tells us that many years before the Spanish conquest, Huatulco was visited by a bearded, robed white man identified by the natives as

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# The other Huatulco



La entrega beach

even more miraculous. In the cross was finally bro- smaller crosses were made his wood and sent to the City Cathedral and the

## Wildlife

The natural beauty of Huatulco is overwhelming. Along the coastline, the soft sandy beaches are unspoiled and sheltered. With 36 beaches and coves, it is possible to escape the crowds

entirely and to swim alone. This level of privacy is one of the things that makes Huatulco different from other resorts. Nor are these beaches just barren stretches of white sand; lush vegetation comes right down to the beach, offering welcome shade and interesting animal life.

The variety of marine life and living coral reefs makes Huatulco a great spot for snorkeling and scuba diving. It is safe to swim in the ocean. The waters are protected

■ Continued on Page 4

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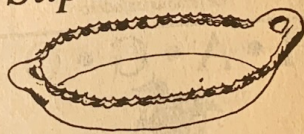
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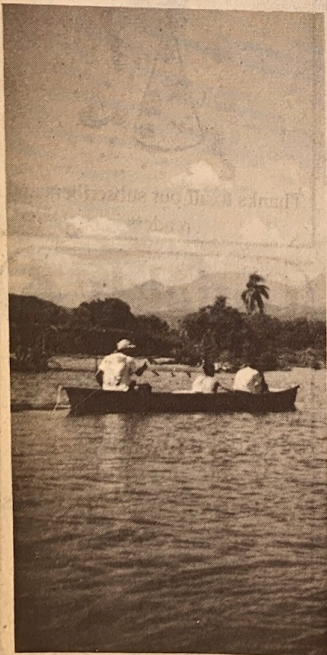
on the beach in a "palapa" or seaside restaurant. From Santa Cruz Bay to Tangolunda Bay, site of the luxury hotels, restaurants, golf course, tourist office and a beautiful public beach, a taxi costs N\$ 8.00 and the bus costs N\$ 2.00. The buses run frequently and Tangolunda is certainly worth a look, as the hotel developments are really quite beautiful.

## Daytime activities

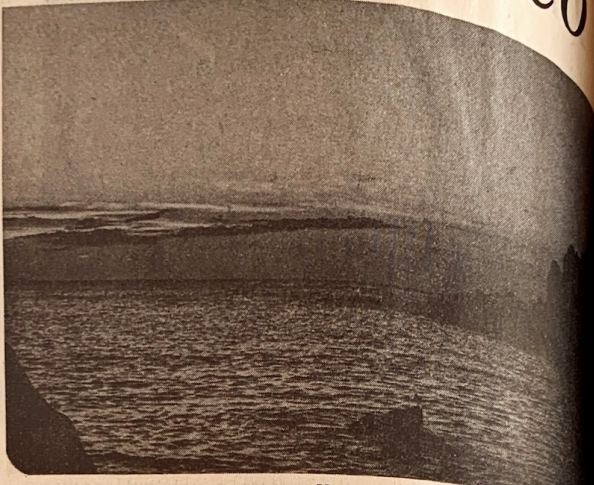
Excursions, water sports, delicious seafood and relaxing in the sun are the principal ingredients of a vacation in Huatulco. Renting a bicycle is another fun way to explore the area. Bicycle or moped rentals can be arranged in La Crucecita.

Shopping and nightlife at this moment are pretty much limited to the hotel, since the first major shopping centers are small. There is only one disco in Santa Cruz Bay called Magic Circus and a couple of restaurant-night clubs with live music.

Daytime activities are Huatulco's strong point. The main



Copalita's river tour



Huatulco

attraction in Huatulco is the magnificent coastline, and there are bay cruises which leave Santa Cruz Bay at 11.00 a.m. and visit seven bays, stopping for a lunch of fresh fish and for snorkeling and swimming. The cruise returns at 6.00 p.m. Prices may range from N\$ 65.00 to N\$ 95.00 for the all-day excursion. This is really the only way to see Huatulco's Bays,

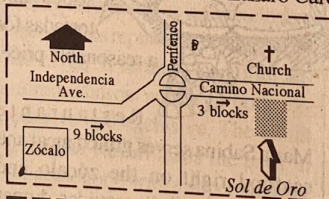
as few of them are accessible by road.

Travel agencies such as Plus located at Blvd. Benito Juárez No. 5, Bahía de Santa Cruz, Huatulco, Oaxaca. Phones: 91 (958) 702-16, 700-77 (ext. 422). Fax: 702-16 can book this trip.

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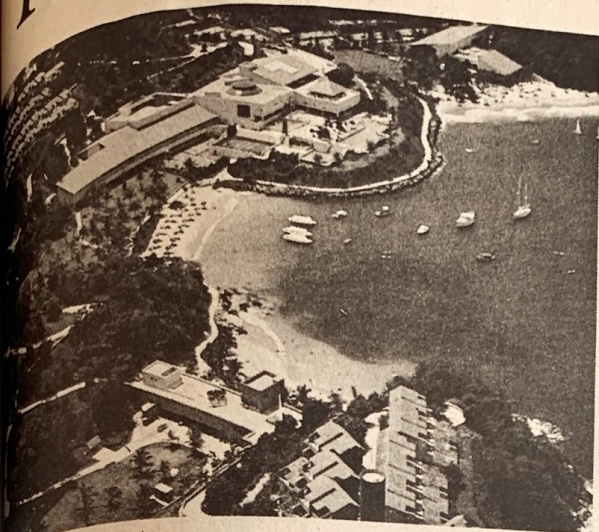
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# The other Huatulco



A view of Tangolunda

Continued from Page 6

You can negotiate with boat owners in Santa Cruz Bay, and for \$5.00 dollars they will ferry you in a "panga" to La Entrega beach, a short walk from Santa Cruz, where you can spend the day snorkeling and eating at the palapa restaurants.

La Entrega beach is a cove covered for snorkeling and diving because of its turquoise water and colorful fish. The shallow clear waters are ideal for swimming.

Equipment can be rented on the beach at La Entrega or at the marina where you leave. There is a dive shop in the Hotel Castillo, Santa Cruz Bay, which rents scuba gear and arranges outings.

In front of the big hotels along Tangolunda Bay you can rent aquaplanos starting at N\$ 10.00 and parasailing is only N\$ 25.00, a real bargain for the brave-of-heart. Windsurfing and water-surfing are other options.

At the moment, the most complete line of equipment rental and other services for hotel guests can be found at Tangolunda. But at Chahue water park, you can also rent jet skis, and surf boards and sails, and even a ultra light sport airplane. The park also offers snorkel and scuba diving equip-

ment, plus diving lessons and diving trips under the guidance of qualified instructors with certificates.

For nature lovers, Posada Michelle (tel: 7-05-35) in Cruccecita offers Eco-tours exploring jungle flora and fauna and visiting a bird sanctuary. The trip is by boat with some walking involved and takes 6 hours. The price is a \$ 35.00 U.S. dollars. You might want to take a mud bath in the Copalita River, as the clay has an astringent effect upon the skin which leaves it like newborn skin.

### Getting there

Huatulco is served by an international airport, with flights directly to the U.S. and Europe. Flights to Oaxaca on AeroMorelos cost N\$ 520.00 round - trip for the 40 minute flight, and during high season there are two flights a day in each direction on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Mexicana Airlines flies directly from Huatulco to Mexico City. A new airline, Montes Azules, flies from Huatulco to Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of Chiapas, where you can continue on to visit Palenque ruins.

From the airport, Transportes

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# The other Huatulco

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Terrestres mini buses cover the 13 mile drive to the Bays of Huatulco for \$ 9.00 U.S. dollars a person, and a taxi runs \$ 18.00 U.S. dollars.

The trip by bus from Oaxaca is inexpensive but tiring, as the 8 hour journey crosses the winding mountain roads. Bus prices start at N\$ 40.00 depending on the bus line and the season. From Puerto Escondido, Estrella Blanca provides hourly bus service and first - class buses link Huatulco with Acapulco.

Even though the government plans to develop Huatulco into a mega-resort rivaling Acapulco and Cancun, you do not see construction everywhere. Plans for the near future are to have thirty six thousand guest rooms available. It is interesting to note that from January to September of this year 90% of the visitors to Huatulco were Mexicans.

However you arrive in Huatulco, the destination is worth the expense and effort.

- Written by Jackie Spiegl and Yolanda García Caballero.

The Oaxaca Times would like to thank Professor Martinez Moscoso and his incredible staff at the tourist office in Huatulco.

For general or specific information concerning the Bays of Huatulco area or the southern coastal region contact:

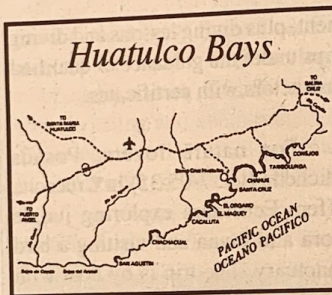
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View from "piedra de los sacrificios"



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