

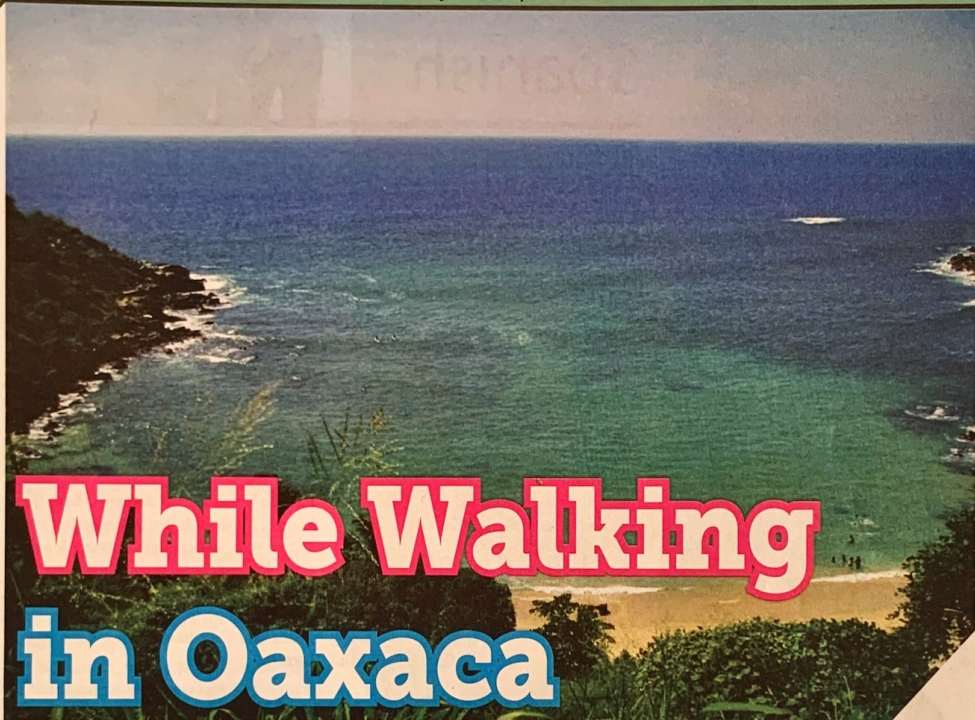


# Oaxaca Times<sup>®</sup>

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## While Walking in Oaxaca

HUATULCO, SALINA CRUZ AND EVENTUALLY PUERTO ARISTA CHIAPAS WERE THE SIGHTS TO SEE ON THIS LEG OF THE ROAD TRIP. HIGHWAY 200 IS AN AMAZING PLACE, IT STRETCHES 2000 KILOMETERS ALL ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST OF MEXICO AND GUATEMALA.

### THE COAST TO SALINA CRUZ ON THE CARRETERA PACIFICO

Written by Justin Kenneth Rowley

**L**eaving Puerto Escondido you will find that the roads in very good condition as they are being upgraded and worked on even now. You will also find that Puerto Escondido's beauty makes you want to stay indefinitely.

Acapulco is a short trip west on highway 200 and would provide an amazing experience for anyone wanting to see one of Mexico's first real tourist havens. Huatul-

co, Salina Cruz and eventually Puerto Arista Chiapas were the sights to see on this leg of the road trip.

Highway 200 is an amazing place, it stretches 2000 kilometers all along the pacific coast of Mexico and Guatemala. The road is straight in some sections and more exciting in others but it's nothing like the twists and turns of highway 175.

While heading east through the hills you will come across one of Oaxaca's most famous tourist destinations. Huatulco is one of the most picturesque places on the planet, she has never taken a bad photo.

The beaches here are small in size becau-

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se of the jagged rocky coastline, they are called Bahías in Spanish.

If you want your own private Bahía and a spot to park your cruise ship then this is the place for you. The accommodations here are pricy in comparison to Puerto Escondido however there is a high level of development and many first class hotels to choose from.

You can actually surf in Huatulco and surf well, numerous high quality waves break on many of the local beaches. La Crucecita is the main town with Santa Cruz and Tangolunda as well making up the area known as Huatulco.

After driving through more of the rolling hills on Oaxaca's golden coast, you will finally be greeted by Salina Cruz. The town is known mostly for its shipping port, seafood, surfing schools and beautiful beaches.

There was no natural harbor here until man intervened in the late 1800's. The railway built a modern town out of a fishing village and a port where there wasn't one before. Highway 200 effectively ends in Salina Cruz, it veers north and connects to highway 190 for a while then becomes 200 again.

The reason the highway turns so abruptly north is because of the 500 km long lagoon system that begins at Salina Cruz. This lagoon system stretches down Mexico's coastline until it's eventual ending point in Puerto Arista Chiapas.

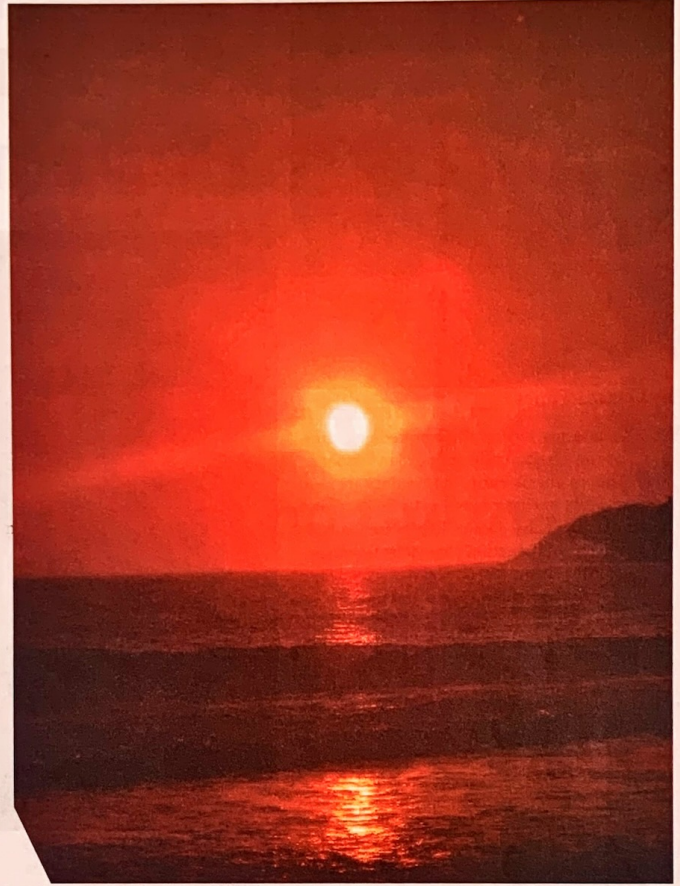
Once you're going north along the coast of the lagoon system you will find yourself in Latin America's biggest wind farm, the turbines at the Eurus wind farm are surreal and they stretch as far as the eye can see in all directions.

This farm is situated in a perfect place to gather free wind energy, the second you get out of the car you will feel why.

This area of Oaxaca is a grave yard for hats of all shapes and sizes, few hats that venture outside the car doors will ever make it home to tell the tale.

Once again this part of road has tolls and is always kept in fine condition, you can drive at the speed of 110 kms in a straight line for long distances until you reach the final few towns near the border.

The border of Oaxaca and Chiapas can't be called a traditional "hot border", there is



many military check points to clear and the military forces were very friendly and very well armed.

If you have all your documents ready to go and you drive slow with your emergency flashers on you won't have any problem with the check points either.

The issues in Chiapas are a story for another day and the beach town rarely traveled to was the reason for this leg of the journey.

Puerto Arista is situated beside an expansive set of lagoons that are unbelievably beautiful, one of these massive lagoons is

The entire region remains untouched by tourists and only the people of Chiapas use this beach once or twice a year on religious holidays.

A very small community lives here in fishing villages on the beach and dotted up and down the road to Tonalá.

The beach itself has very little infrastructure and you need to bring pesos with you as no one accepts cards of any kind.

The area only has a handful of hotels available but if you come in the off season you won't have any problems finding a room at a fair price.



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## HOLY WEEK IN OAXACA

By Oaxaca Times

**L**a Cuaresma, the forty days preceding Easter- are an excellent time to spend in Oaxaca.

The weather is warm, the evenings are ideal for wandering, having a nieve at La Soledad or a beer or snack at the Zócalo. The jacaranda trees are in bloom with beautiful blue-violet flowers.

Every Friday of the lent season young men from local universities follow an old tradition giving flowers to young girls who are pursuing to be the Madrina of the fiesta. Try to be at the Llano park every Friday of the Lent season to also listen to the Oaxacan band or marimba music from 8 to 10 am

On the fourth Friday of Lent, do not miss to be on Alcalá St. -between Santo Domingo church and La Sangre de Cristo church- where many Oaxacan women following a lovely tradition celebrate The Good Samaritan Day- the biblical story of Jesus being given a drink of water by a woman (the good Samaritan) Oaxacan women make delicious fruit-flavored aguas and serve them to visitors and passers-by from huge flower-draped clay pots. 12 noon

The 5th Friday is worth to visit Etlá. This town celebrate El Señor de las Peñas. All day

On the sixth Friday of the cuaresma, many Oaxacans create beautiful altars to honor the Dolores Virgin. Chia-sprouting clay animals symbolizing spring and re-birth decorate the altars. The neighborhoods of Jalatlaco and Xochimilco are a must to visit on this day. Between 5 to 7 pm

Palm Sunday-April 13- We strongly suggest you to visit the town of San Antonino ,Ocotlán where they have a unique festival in the patio of the church with a big auction of all the gifts that the town people offer to Jesus. The festival starts at 10 AM

Do not miss Easter day by going to El Carmen Alto Church at 7pm. Mass, dinner and fireworks for everybody!

# 14 February Valentine's Day in Mexico



By Oaxaca Times

**O**n Valentine's Day in Mexico, people celebrate love and friendship in an exciting way. In Oaxaca most places are an all day and night carnival where you find bustling M. Alcalá street filled with colorful balloons, fragrant flowers especially red roses, loads of chocolate and candies, cute stuffed toys like puppies and teddy bears.

Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14th February in Mexico known as Día de San Valentín. Locally it is popularly known as El Día del Amor y la Amistad, translating to the "Day of Love and Friendship".

Traditionally, Mexicans value friendships intensely and on this day apart from their loved ones, they express love and appreciation even to friends who they are

closely connected with.

In late 16th century, singing and chanting poetry was a tradition in Aztec Mexico. These compositions were verses describing Mexican folklore ancient Mexico.

Through some of the Aztec poetry still recited today, you can discover the deep rooted beliefs of Mexicans especially about their innate respect for friendship which they considered to be the gift of the Gods.

Therefore till today especially in Mexico, Valentine's Day is considered special not only for lovers, romantic partners or married couples it is also a day when Mexicans express a genuine, deep rooted respect and appreciation they have for their friends.

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