

The Eye

Beach, Village + Urban Living in Mexico

October 2025

Issue 151

FREE



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Breaking Machismo's Hold?
Mexico's Women
After One Year of Sheinbaum

Psilocybe mexicana:
The Art and Culture of
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5 Kinds of Tacos—and When to Eat Them

Remembering Deborah Van Hoewyk



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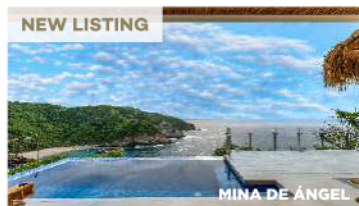
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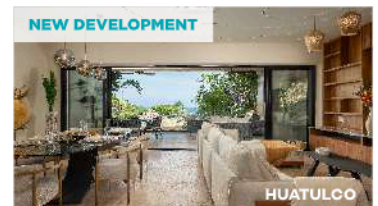
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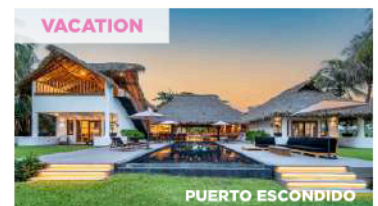
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Editor's Letter

**"We must strive to become good ancestors."
Ralph Nader**

What is your life's purpose? Day of the Dead is a time to contemplate life and the lives of those who came before us. This is the first year that my mother's photo will join my father's on the altar and I can feel the tears welling up even as I write this. As I was caring for her in the last months of her life it became clear to me that the trivialities we obsess over are mere distractions.

I am baffled by the news and stories of those in power, the anger and frustration that ripples around the world. This hunger for power that seems to ignore the inner world of individuals. The way these topics dominate conversations, the way we use our political beliefs to define us rather than the other way around. When I was asked recently what my core beliefs are, I realized they can be summed up in four simple principles:

1. Bodily autonomy
2. Equitable distribution of wealth- there is enough for everyone; enough food, enough healthcare, enough water
3. Freedom of movement for all
4. A life without violence

When world leaders discuss strategies and economic reforms that encourage more violence, less freedom of movement, and scarcity for some while others have more than they could ever need, I can't help but wonder: what is our life's purpose?

At the end of life, what will we take with us? We can view history as a series of wars and power shifts and try to devise a winning formula. But winning—there's another concept that makes little sense. Is the winner the one with the most money, or the one who is most content?

For myself, I try and move through the world feeling energy rather than corralling wealth or power. I want to feel the energy of a tree rather than calculate it's monetary value. I want to approach each person I meet with compassion, I want to live in a paradigm of abundance- I know there is enough for everybody if we distribute it properly.

Thinking on that time with my mother I'm reminded that our real legacy is not wealth or power, but how deeply we've loved and how much kindness we've shared. Death invites us to ask 'what is your life's purpose? What do you want your legacy to be?'

This month we mourn the loss of our colleague and friend Deborah Van Hoewyk. She is greatly missed and leaves behind a legacy of kindness and curiosity.

See you next month,

Jane

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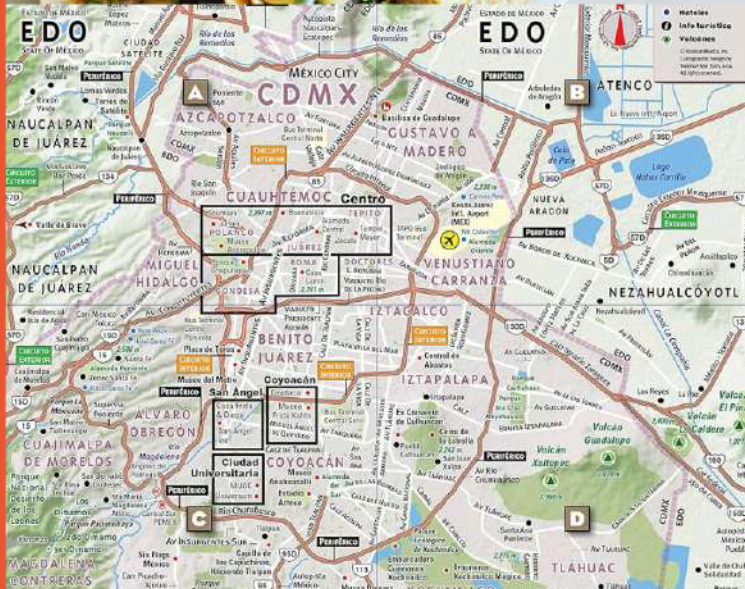
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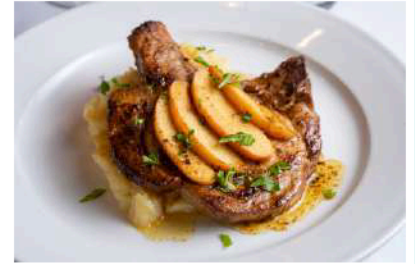
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Remembering Deborah Van Hoewyk

By Randy Jackson

"It was an accident, my obsession with oh-so-blue jacaranda... I'd come to Oaxaca for a university conference, and thought, 'I got his far, why not stay and go to the beach? I see this place called Huatulco...'"

So began Deborah's serendipitous arrival into a diverse community of snowbirds and expats in this warm, jewelled collection of bays on the Pacific Coast. Only Deborah was more than a member of this community; she was a catalyst in its formation. With her energy, curiosity, and instinct for helping people and animals alike, she drew others together and turned chance acquaintances into lasting friendships.

A Life of Learning and Connection

Deborah was born in Providence, Rhode Island, and grew up in Cumberland, Maine. Her academic pursuits were extensive: she earned a bachelor's degree in English from Columbia University and a master's from Queens College, City University of New York. She later pursued doctoral studies in Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. In 1986, she married John. Concurrent with their academic careers, they embraced a different kind of life on a 40-acre farm near Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they raised sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry.

Like many of her friends in Huatulco, Deborah and John's transition into retirement marked the beginning of a new chapter, a rich life spent with winters in Huatulco, surrounded by friends and a social calendar full of activities.

The Rhythm of Life in Huatulco

In 2007, Deborah and John bought their home in Santa Cruz. Their evenings soon found their own unique rhythm, with the sounds of the "pineapple dance" drifting over their garden wall from the Binniguenda Hotel. Life in their Mexican home had its own rhythm, too, coloured by the often humorous unpredictability of renovations, shifting household staff, and the antics of coatimundis and leaf-cutter ants. Each year, the season was punctuated by the must-have invitation, the end-of-volleyball-season party at the Van Hoewyks.

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Deborah's contributions to the Huatulco community were both wide-ranging and deeply felt. Her passion for animal welfare was evident through her work with several organizations: the **Snipsisters**, which focused on pet and street animal sterilization; **Palmas Unidas**, which organized rescue and clinic work; and **Forever Homes**, where she and John fostered animals awaiting adoption. Beyond her love of animals, she also supported the **Bacaanda Foundation**, working to create stronger educational opportunities in rural Oaxaca.

Throughout their years in Huatulco, Deborah's energy and curiosity animated every part of her life. She continued her study of Spanish and, with John, explored the region's hidden corners - remote bays, coffee farms, eco hideaways, and off-the-beaten-path communities. She became a valued part of *The Huatulco Eye* magazine as both a writer and copy editor and was an active participant in countless local initiatives. Each winter, she and John made the long, adventurous drive from their northern home on the Atlantic coast to their southern home on the Pacific, often hauling supplies for volunteer projects but always leaving space for their beloved cats.

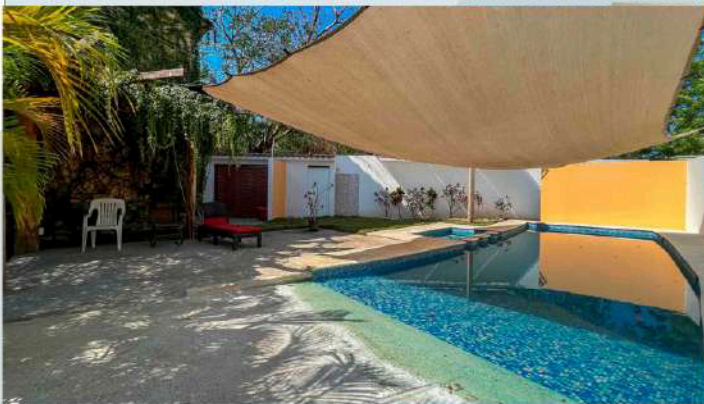
A Legacy of Friendship

In 2023, Deborah and John sold their house in Santa Cruz, shifting gears to new adventures in later retirement. She maintained her passion for books and book clubs while also writing grant proposals for non-profit organizations, engaging in community gardening, undertaking home renovations, and exploring through international travel. Her energy and curiosity endured throughout a full and rich life. Deborah passed away on August 28, 2025, in Portland, Maine.

These words are offered in remembrance of Deborah — as a proud friend, one among many, and as a colleague at *The Eye*. All of us, writers, readers, and friends alike, remain grateful for the many ways she enriched our community, and especially thankful for the gift of her friendship and her presence in our lives.

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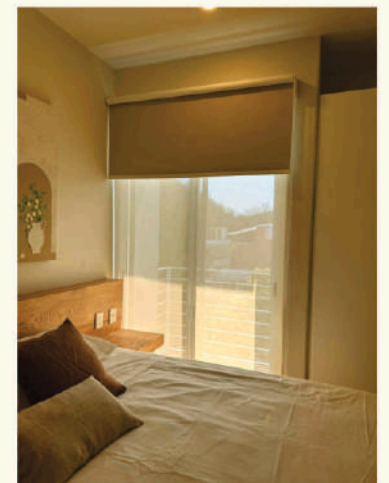


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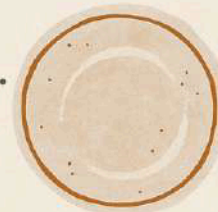
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Stories of Transformation: Books that Changed Minds

By Carole Reedy

"Books are not about passing time. They are about other lives, other worlds. Read to find out what other people are like." So said the observational yet insightful, droll yet sharp English writer Alan Bennett.

Reading for pleasure is, in fact, enlightenment. The insight into other worlds helps us understand ourselves, our motives, and our ultimate search for a good life.

I spoke with a variety of readers who shared with me the books that changed a perception, an overall perspective, or that offered a new point of view.

Try to see the world with wonder, just as children do ***The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**

Our friend Dan Battista adores *The Little Prince*, which he taught in French to his senior high school students. He found the book important not only for learning a command of the language, but also in the life lessons imparted: the values of love and relationships, which prove in the long run to be more important than wealth or status.



Another one of his favorite quotes helped him feel more comfortable with death: that of seeing stars as a laughing presence of our loved ones. The little prince says: "In one of the stars I shall be living. In one of the stars, I shall be laughing."

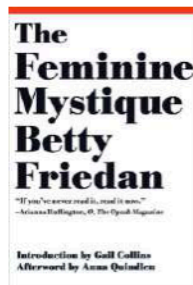
Dan tried to impart his love of the novel and its lessons to his students. Some of them "got it" and others didn't. C'est la vie!

Declaring one's own path ***The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan**

Because it couldn't be stated better, here is a quote directly from ex Peace Corp volunteer and retired physical education teacher Martha Larson:

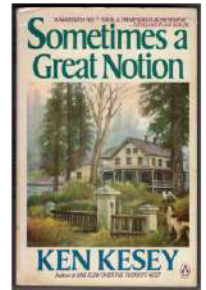
"Personally, the most influential book I discovered was *The Feminine Mystique*. It stiffened my backbone as a young woman who was deciding how to define herself and set boundaries. It affirmed my perception that I was being boxed in by societal expectations for women and girls. It made me want to declare my own path.

This was all new territory for me as a very naive young woman. Once my husband and I returned to the U.S. (from Venezuela Peace Corps duty) I was able to read *Ms. Magazine*. I was captivated by the short stories, articles, and poetry of women who were speaking to me in a very personal way. I felt someone was singing my tune. It was thrilling to me to imagine a more expansive way forward."



Being different ***Sometimes a Great Notion* by Ken Kesey**

Seattle resident, world traveler, and helper to all, Steve Claggett returned home from the Peace Corps to the realization of how different he was from his family (like Leland Stanford in the novel) and that he would need to make his own way in the world. He cut all financial ties and help from his family and worked his way through law school. Unsurprisingly, he became an attorney who worked on developing low-income housing.



Steve refers also to Robert Pirsig's *Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* in his struggle to deal with being different. Both books present characters who break from a traditional mold to become distinct in themselves, people whose values and mores differ from the mainstream. So what changed for Steve? It was validation that we can choose to be different—even that it is our duty to maximize our uniqueness.

No correct interpretation ***The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell**

Nancy Gurrola, former history professor, tells us of her passion for this quartet of books when she was 16 years old. Today, they remain reader favorites:

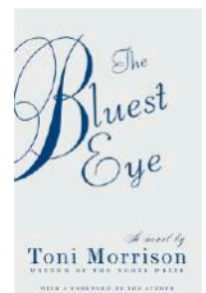


"My reading level took an immediate jump up with a style of writing I'd never encountered (an intertwined plot developed from varying points of view), complex characters in what was to me an exotic setting, and erotic passages, which I'm sure I didn't really understand at 16. My takeaway from the constellation of perspectives on the same narrative was that there is no 'correct' story or interpretation of history. No doubt that observation unconsciously helped me when I became a history professor."

Professor Gurrola went on to tell me that she recently reread the quartet and did not find it as stimulating as she did at 16. However, I read the Quartet recently (for the first time) as a septuagenarian and found it challenging, stimulating, and oh so enchanting.

Society's standards of beauty ***The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison**

In many Western cultures blonde hair and blue eyes have been (and still are) considered the most desirable appearance and, often, the standard of beauty.



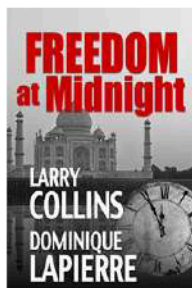
The Bluest Eye, Morrison's first novel, published in 1970, tells the story of an 11-year-old African American girl during the Great Depression. Deemed “ugly” because of her dark skin and mannerisms, she longs for blue eyes—the symbol of whiteness and acceptance.

The impact of this discrimination and the isolation suffered by the girl was devastating to reader Camille, as well as to many of us as young adults in the 1970s.

Understanding a culture

***Freedom at Midnight* by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins**

“This riveting account of the Hindu-Muslim conflict gave me a front row seat to Hindu-Muslim relations in India, and the birth of Pakistan in 1947.” The reader here, Kathy Kaye, is a writer of fiction, well-known for her Warehouse Winery Mystery series (and her latest book, *Interview with the Tarot Reader*).



The books of Lapierre and Collins are a marvelous way to read and understand our world and history. Their writing is not turgid, as are many of the nonfiction accounts of the same story. Their approach involves the reader and speaks in a tone we readily understand. It feels as if you're reading a novel partly because the people of the region—not just the battles and conflicts—are the focus.

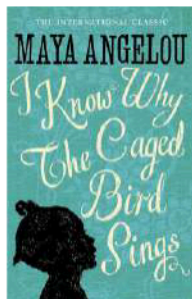
Even when you know the history and results, the stories of Lapierre and Collins are always spellbinding and gripping. The characterizations meld with the action for an unputdownable reading experience.

Different worlds, same time

***I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou**

Avid reader Phyllis Kopriva, who chose this book, lives her dedication to the written word: she once belonged to four bookclubs, each of which met monthly.

This was the first book that made her aware of just how singular our place is in the world. Others grew up in very different worlds and thrived as well, just differently. And it wasn't merely a distinct time period, such as in the classics. This was a completely different world, happening parallel to her lived existence.



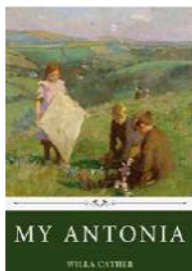
Reading this Angelou classic, Phyllis understood for the first time that great writing is what brings us into these worlds, allowing us to fully grasp a new perception of them.

Respect and sharing

***My Antonia* by Willa Cather**

The reader of this book is a former physician who at 92 years old still reads voraciously. After decades of reading, the novel that stands out in his mind is *My Antonia*. “It taught me a lot about respect and sharing.”

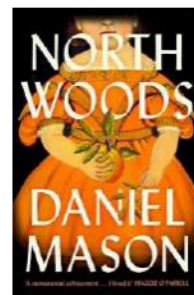
It's interesting that although his profession is one filled with respect and sharing that he still learned more and found reinforcement for his beliefs through novels. The doctor's favorite books, though, are those of the always-memorable Brontë sisters.



No place like home

***North Woods* by Daniel Mason**

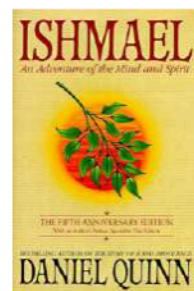
This popular novel helped reader Julie Sanchez in reflecting on the many histories of a home. She has been attached to the history of her homes in Denver since childhood, as well as her current residences in Cuernavaca and Oaxaca, Mexico, finding fascinating the continuing history of a home. She comments, “Think of what your home was in 1890! It does give one pause to reflect.”



Transfiguring the contexts of understanding culture

***Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn**

Although published in 1992, Quinn's still popular tale of a philosophic Socratic discourse between a gorilla and human is the basis for this novel that changed plant ecologist Laura Warman's way of thinking about our planet. She looked anew at the narratives that western civilizations tell us and that we use to base our relationships with each other and the planet.



“The book stuck with me for many years, and had the same impact when I re-read it. I have fond memories of an international scientific conference in Sweden, where I met a group of fast friends and ended up discussing this book late into the night in a progression of drinking establishments in GamlaStan in Stockholm.”

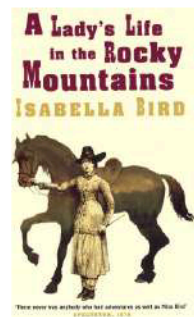
Quinn looks at the failure of human civilization, going so far as suggesting how to correct it. His theory is based on the tenet that we belong to the planet, not vice versa.

Possibilities and perseverance

***A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella Bird**

This is a story of a woman who often fell ill in her native Scotland, and subsequently became a world traveler and writer.

The account tells the tale of her travels alone, astride a horse in a divided skirt, in 19th century United States. She rode from California to Colorado, where she spent the winter in an isolated cabin.



Her experience changed Betty Warman's perception of the “old west” and what was possible for women at that time. Betty, a former museum graphic designer in Mexico City, was raised on a ranch in Arizona in an era that was certainly wilder than it currently is. She has delighted in all of Isabella Bird's books and adventures.

Another way of viewing racism and civil rights

The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Journalist, editor, and constant gardener Heidi Hough discovered, in this autobiography, a philosophy that altered her thinking about the civil rights era.

“Reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* shifted my worldview to an alternate way of thinking about racism and civil rights. The book was a distinct counterweight to Dr Martin Luther King's approach of nonviolent resistance.



King's notion of racial justice was based broadly on integration, non-violent protest, and civil disobedience. King was a peacemaker who built coalitions with white activists.

Reading Malcom X opened my eyes to a courageous and authentic counterpoint that outlined a way to freedom and equality that was initially based on black pride and "any means necessary," including violence. Malcolm X's autobiography tells the story of a human rights activist whose alliance with the Nation of Islam shifts with time and disillusionment, but whose philosophical devotion to racial justice was unwavering. Decades later, these approaches still resonate in the effort to secure reproductive rights for women in the United States.

Impact of the written word

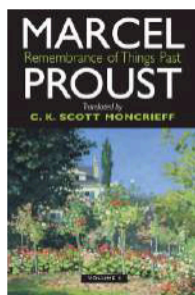
***Remembrances of Things Past* by Marcel Proust**

This from yours truly:

"Now I can die" was my first thought upon finishing Proust's seven-volume masterpiece *Remembrances of Things Past*. I really meant to say "What can I possibly read after this life-changing tome?"

In my 74 years of reading, I have yet to encounter such sublime beauty in the written word as that found in these seven novels. That is the root of my recommendation. I appreciated other significant factors, such as embracing the power of memory, as well as mindfulness and reflection, but his sharing of secluded feelings with such elegance was the most memorable to me.

I read it at 40, and I hope to have another read during this lifetime.



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Huatulco, an Enclave of Cultures

By José Palacios y Román

Long before the arrival of the Aztec (Nahuatl) people in the Valley of Mexico—and centuries before the Spanish conquest—the Oaxacan coast was home to thriving civilizations. The bays of Huatulco and their surrounding forests were dotted with human settlements and centers of high culture.

One of the most remarkable sites is the Copalita Eco-Archaeological Park, with its sanctuaries, ritual ball court, astronomical observatory, and sacred spaces for solar and lunar ceremonies. Archaeologists believe this was a cosmopolitan hub where diverse pre-Hispanic cultures—the Chontal, Zapotec, Mixtec, and even the Maya—converged. Much remains to be studied, but the late anthropologist Raúl Matadamas identified more than 180 unexplored vestiges in the region, including significant remains at the stunning Cacaluta Beach.

While written history only scratches the surface of this region's cultural richness, Huatulco continues to evolve. Just fifty years ago, the local population relied primarily on fishing, corn farming, and seasonal coffee harvests. Today, tourism drives the economy, yet a new generation—rooted in ancestral traditions—is emerging with fresh artistic energy.



The natural beauty of Huatulco has long inspired artists from around the world, but it is the local painters who have given the region a distinct cultural identity. Masters such as Rafael Ortega, Abdías García, Edna Guzmán, Hergón, Heriberto Palafox, Susana Rubin, and Aranza León have established a lasting legacy, exhibiting in the

few but growing number of local galleries.

Foreign collectors from Canada, the United States, and Europe have also played a role in elevating the region's art scene, acquiring works that capture the pulse and emotion of Mexican creativity. Beyond its aesthetic power, art here has become a meaningful investment and a bridge connecting cultures.

For those eager to experience this creative spirit, the Copalli Art Gallery in Tangolunda offers a curated selection of works by local, national, and international artists. It stands as a testament to Huatulco's unique blend of history, nature, and artistic expression—an open invitation to discover all this coastal enclave has to offer.

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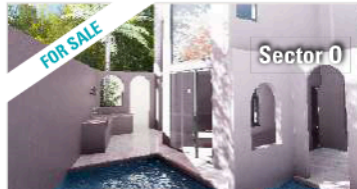
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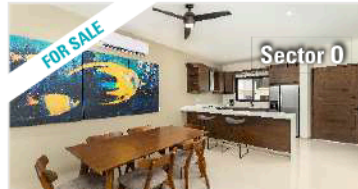
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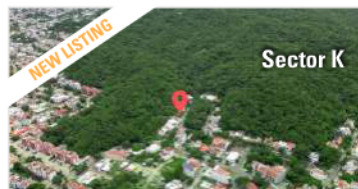
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PEMEX and President Claudia Sheinbaum

By Julie Etra

As this issue explores Mexico's president one year after her remarkable rise to the presidency, I decided to write about one of the many challenges she faces: a perpetually lingering, decades-old economic problem — PEMEX and its viability.



PEMEX's profitability remains complex. Factors include insufficient new exploration, aging and poorly maintained infrastructure, spills, vandalism, corruption, and long-term production declines — along with exposure to oil-price cycles. Above all, debt is the headline problem: around US\$100 billion in financial debt, with more than US\$20 billion owed to suppliers, making

PEMEX the world's most-indebted oil company.

Fuel theft, called *huachicol*, is a major drag. Recent cases underscore its scale: on Sept. 8, 2025, authorities announced 14 arrests, including customs officials, businesspeople, and members of the armed forces, in a probe into a fuel-smuggling network; in parallel enforcement, authorities have reported large seizures of stolen diesel.

So, what is the Sheinbaum administration proposing?

1) Energy security + cleaner mix.

Mexico imports significant volumes of U.S. natural gas via pipelines from Texas, much of it used for power generation. The administration has signaled plans to bolster domestic gas output while pushing renewables, like solar and wind, and exploring strategic inputs such as lithium for batteries, alongside a national energy plan to expand generation capacity toward 2030.

2) Tax and debt overhauls.

In late 2024, the government simplified PEMEX's fiscal regime to a single levy, the *Derecho Petrolero para el Bienestar* (roughly 30% on oil and ~11.6–12% on non-associated gas in 2025), explicitly to reduce PEMEX's historic tax burden and allow more investment. A broader 10-year plan (2025–2035) aims to lower debt, reprofile maturities, and gradually phase out federal financial support by 2027—a pledge reiterated in August–September 2025 as the government arranged bond issues and buybacks tied to a debt-management strategy.

3) Anti-corruption enforcement.

President Sheinbaum recently said former PEMEX CEO Carlos Treviño was arrested in the U.S. and would be deported to Mexico to face corruption charges linked to the Odebrecht/Braskem case—an extradition request pending for about five years.

Separately, U.S. authorities in August 2025 indicted two Mexico-based businessmen over alleged bribes to obtain PEMEX contracts.

Given the ambition of the 10-year plan and the 2027 support “off-ramp,” it will be worth revisiting this in 2027, when federal support is slated to cease. As Sheinbaum put it: the goal is for PEMEX to stand on its own by 2027.

First, a little background. The acronym stands for *Petróleos Mexicanos*. For a detailed, in-depth analysis of its origins, see the 2022 *The Eye* archives: <https://theeyehuatulco.com/2022/03/28/politics-petroleum-and-the-environmenthow-to-doom-your-countrys-climate-targets>. This excellent article was by Deborah van Hoewyk, who sadly recently passed away. Deborah was a long-time contributor to *The Eye* and a scholar in her own right (a tribute to her by Randy Jackson is included in this issue).

To quote Deborah's article: “Before expropriation, there were 17 international firms producing oil in Mexico, dominated by the Mexican Eagle Company (a subsidiary of the Royal Dutch/Shell Company, now just 'Shell') and various U.S. firms (Jersey Standard, a branch of Standard Oil, and Standard Oil Company of California, SOCAL, now Chevron); together the Dutch and the Americans (basically, the Rockefellers) controlled 90% of the production of Mexican oil; Gulf Oil added another 5%.”

In 1938, President Lázaro Cárdenas expropriated foreign oil assets and created a state oil monopoly. Mexico's major new refinery project, Olmeca (often called Dos Bocas), is located in Paraíso, Tabasco; it is designed for 340,000 barrels per day and to produce ultra-low-sulfur fuels.

What propelled expropriation was a union strike against the international petroleum consortium and the refusal of foreign companies to accept new contract terms—an inflection point that reshaped Mexico's energy sector.

PEMEX's solvency has been a persistent issue, in part because government budgets long relied on PEMEX revenues for far more than exploration, refining, storage, distribution, and maintenance. Expectations were high—perhaps unrealistically so.

President Enrique Peña Nieto's 2013 energy reform amended the Constitution to allow private participation across the sector; it did not privatize PEMEX. Subsequent policy under Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) reasserted a larger state role and increased support for PEMEX, while also emphasizing “energy sovereignty.”

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Mexico-U.S. Issues during Sheinbaum's First Year

By Marcia Chaiken and Jan Chaiken

During Claudia Sheinbaum's first months as president, relations with the U.S. administration were relatively calm. Joe Biden, having stepped aside from a second presidential run, was focused on preserving his legacy of rebuilding cooperative international relationships. Soon after Mexico's election, Biden issued an official statement:

"I congratulate Claudia Sheinbaum on her historic election as the first woman President of Mexico. I look forward to working closely with President-elect Sheinbaum in the spirit of partnership and friendship that reflects the enduring bonds between our two countries. I express our commitment to advancing the values and interests of both our nations to the benefit of our peoples."

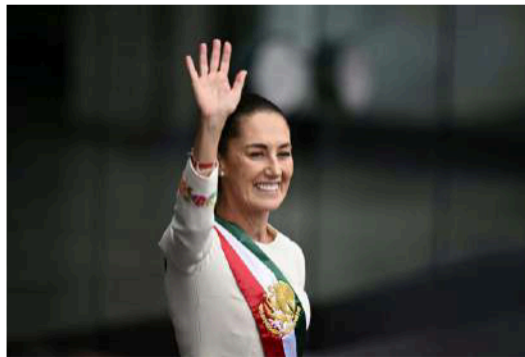
Even before taking office, Sheinbaum responded warmly, making clear she looked forward to working with Biden until the end of his term. She noted she would be glad to work with another woman president—hinting at Kamala Harris—but emphasized that it was for U.S. voters to decide, and that she would cooperate with whoever was elected.

Biden did not attend Sheinbaum's inauguration but sent a Presidential Delegation led by First Lady Jill Biden, joined by U.S. officials with close family ties to Mexico. For a moment, things seemed smooth. But only weeks after Sheinbaum took office, the U.S. electorate chose Donald Trump—who had launched his first campaign eight years earlier by declaring that Mexico was sending "drug dealers, criminals, and rapists." Sheinbaum must have known that the smooth sailing under Biden was about to give way to rougher seas.

Trump's belligerence toward Latin America was on display immediately—in his inauguration speech and in a flurry of executive orders. These included militarizing the U.S. border with Mexico and even renaming the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America." Sheinbaum met these provocations with calm and humor, suggesting tongue-in-cheek that perhaps the U.S. should rename itself "Mexican America."

As expected from Trump's campaign rhetoric and the ultra-conservative Heritage Foundation's "Project 2025," three issues dominated: mass deportations and immigration barriers, high tariffs on imports, and the threat of military action against cartels.

By September 2025, Sheinbaum had held 14 substantive conversations with Trump. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio even praised her in Mexico City for raising the level of cooperation between the two countries beyond what the U.S. had achieved with any other democracy.



Drug Interdiction

Early on, Trump reportedly asked Sheinbaum in a phone call whether Mexico had a "drug problem." She responded that Mexico was not a drug-consuming country, crediting an intensive public campaign that graphically depicted the physical effects of drug use. Trump, who often boasts of his intelligence, admitted he had learned something and ordered a similar campaign in the U.S.

But while Mexico emphasized prevention, Trump cut funding for treatment programs, turning instead to military interdiction. In September, the U.S. destroyed a ship from Venezuela allegedly carrying illicit drugs. Trump also "offered" to send U.S. troops into Mexico to fight cartels—an offer Sheinbaum firmly rejected, calling such an invasion a hostile act.

Still, she welcomed cooperation similar to U.S. support for Colombia in the 1990s, and unlike her mentor AMLO, she has not relied on the slogan "hugs, not bullets." To meet Trump's demands without ceding sovereignty, she extradited scores of cartel members to the U.S. for prosecution. More importantly, she reframed the problem: not just drugs flowing north, but also guns flowing south—making clear that both are matters of shared security.

Immigration and the Border

Discussions of border control began even before Trump's inauguration. Sheinbaum benefited from AMLO's earlier crackdown, which had already reduced illegal crossings. After one early "perfect phone call," Trump declared that Sheinbaum had agreed to "close down the border." She clarified that Mexico's strategy was to deter migrant caravans while keeping the border open to legitimate traffic.

In September, after meetings between Secretary Rubio and his Mexican counterpart, both nations announced a joint plan: U.S. and Mexican law enforcement would share intelligence and operations—each on their own side—to destroy tunnels used for smuggling drugs north and guns south.

But Trump's mass deportation initiative looms larger. While he promised to deport only undocumented criminals, ICE sweeps have targeted day laborers, college campuses, and communities with long-standing Latino residents. Even DACA youth—brought to the U.S. as children and promised protection—are under threat.

Anticipating Trump's actions, Sheinbaum launched the *México Te Abraza* (Mexico Embraces You) program on the day he took office. Along the border, centers now provide deportees with financial aid, help opening bank accounts, documentation, pensions, scholarships, disability support, and immediate essentials such as food and internet access. As Gandhi said, "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." By this measure, Sheinbaum has placed Mexico in stark contrast to Trump's America.

Tariffs

Trump also revived the long-abandoned strategy of imposing sweeping tariffs. By mid-summer, Canada faced a 35% tariff. Mexico, however, thanks to Sheinbaum's calm but firm negotiating style, secured a 90-day pause to seek alternatives that would not raise prices for consumers on either side of the border.

This pause proved critical. Equal tariffs on Mexico would have caused food inflation and hardship for vulnerable populations in both nations. In September, a U.S. federal appeals court ruled that Trump had overstepped his authority by justifying tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The court allowed existing tariffs to remain until October 14 while the issue heads to the Supreme Court in November.

If SCOTUS upholds the ruling, Sheinbaum can turn to other priorities. If not, she will again face Trump at the negotiating table—armed with patience, pragmatism, and her trademark humor.

Domestic Standing

At home, Sheinbaum's approval ratings remain strong: 79% as of August 2025, twelve points higher than AMLO at the same stage, and far above Trump's 41% in the U.S. Yet when asked specifically about her dealings with Trump, 57% of Mexicans said "bad" or "very bad." That reflects not her performance but the disruptive impact of Trump's policies—especially the decline in remittances from Mexicans in the U.S., which have fallen as deportations and workplace raids intensify.

Families across Mexico feel these changes directly in household income. What many may not see is that compared with other world leaders, Sheinbaum has managed to secure far more productive outcomes in her dealings with U.S., without losing Mexico's dignity or independence.



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Breaking Machismo's Hold? Mexico's Women After One Year of Sheinbaum

By Kary Vannice

When Claudia Sheinbaum stood on stage last October as the first woman ever elected to lead Mexico, it felt like she had the potential to split open the bedrock of the male-dominated culture that has defined this country for centuries. Could Claudia's administration be the wedge that finally pries the machismo foundation open and allows women's rights to get a foothold in a nation long ruled by men?



These are a few of the “wins” for women in Mexico, but Sheinbaum's first year has been one of both promise and contradiction. Despite making some movement forward, many of the old patterns remain — underfunded institutions, muted responses to violence, and a tendency to cast women's activism as disruption rather than democracy.

For this, Sheinbaum has many female critics. “Being a woman does not necessarily embody progressiveness in the women's rights agenda,” said Friné Salguero, director at the Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute, warning that while Sheinbaum's election was historic, her agenda may not be sufficiently transformative. And there is evidence to back up her criticism.

In 2024, when Sheinbaum finally broke through the ultimate glass ceiling, it seemed like more than a political win. For many women it seemed like a chance to finally be seen, heard, and be granted rights that they had long been denied.

And they had very good reasons for those hopes. During the election Sheinbaum leaned into feminist themes, with slogans like “It's time for women”, and made many political promises related to women's rights and equality. Now, a year later, she's had some wins and some losses on the front of equal rights and protection for women.

Her administration pushed forward a sweeping package of constitutional reforms that inserted the principle of substantive equality into the nation's legal foundation. From now on, every law must be drafted with women's rights in mind, and security and justice institutions are required to operate with a gender perspective.

For too long, women have been invisible in legislation and, at the same time, singled out and punished within the judicial system. As activist and lawyer, Patricia Olamendi, has often warned, “laws without gender perspective reproduce inequality.” This reform, at least on paper, is meant to interrupt that cycle.

Sheinbaum also launched a Women's Rights Charter legislatively and published and publicly distributed a handbook to help women and girls understand their rights. Women now have a clear guide that says: these are my rights, and this is where I go when they are violated. In a country where, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, 70% of women over the age of 15 have experienced violence at least once, that kind of information is more than just symbolic, it's empowering.

Economically, she made another very significant move on behalf of older women. A pension program for women aged 60 to 64, one that prioritizes Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women first, and over time expands to reach more than three million by 2026. For women who spent their lives raising families, supporting communities, and often working informally without social security, this pension represents long overdue recognition of their contributions to households, and the nation as a whole. It will not erase decades of invisibility and neglect, but it finally acknowledges that their work matters.

Despite the promises of reform, the numbers don't all add up to better days for women ahead in Mexico. Women's shelters which saw a surge of 75% more users between 2023 and 2024 have had their funding reduced by over 4% in 2025.

The newly created Ministry for Women, designed to give gender policy a permanent place in government, was underfunded at its inception. And even CONAVIM, the agency tasked with preventing violence against women, has faced budget cuts. Women's support organizations warn that these reductions aren't just disappointing, the consequences could be deadly for women and girls.

And of course, there is the violence against women itself. Relentless, visible to the point of being overt, and largely unchecked. Like the murder of influencer Valeria Márquez in Jalisco who was shot during a TikTok livestream in May. Shocking? Yes, but hardly unique in a country where 10 women a day are murdered and 13 are reported missing.

On security, Sheinbaum campaigned as the candidate who could “show results.” Yet polls show nearly half of Mexicans believe violence has gotten worse under her leadership, and women remain at the epicenter of this crisis.

So, yes, the presence of a woman in power matters. But when women still feel unsafe, silenced, or dismissed, presence alone cannot be the measure of progress.

But one cannot measure the weight of 200 years of male domination against a single year in office. Cultures and ideologies as deeply rooted as Mexico's cannot be overturned in twelve months, or even in a single six-year term. But what can be measured is intention. Laws matter, but enforcement matters more. And leadership matters most of all.

The fact that Mexico's most powerful leader is a woman is not meaningless. It is a rupture in a centuries-old foundation. Whether that rupture becomes the wedge that finally opens space for women's rights to deeply root themselves into the bedrock of this nation depends heavily on what Sheinbaum chooses to do next.



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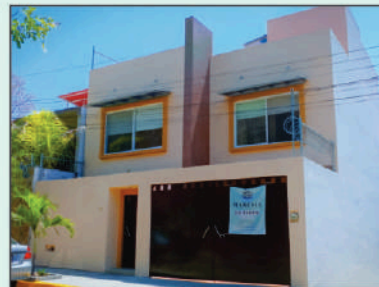
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Psilocybe mexicana: The Art and Culture of Mushrooms in Oaxaca

By Michael Garroni

Oaxaca, long celebrated for its vibrant traditions, cuisine, and biodiversity, is also home to one of the richest legacies of mushroom use in the world. Known locally as *hongos* or *setas*, mushrooms have been an integral part of Oaxacan culture for centuries, woven into rituals, medicine, and the kitchen alike.

The Sierra Norte and Sierra Mazateca regions are blessed with diverse ecosystems where dozens of edible, medicinal, and even sacred fungi flourish. For the Mazatec people, mushrooms have long held spiritual significance. Their ceremonial use, led by healers known as *curanderos* or *curanderas*, traces back to pre-Hispanic times. These ceremonies use mushrooms as a sacred bridge between the natural and spiritual worlds, a tradition still respected and protected in many indigenous communities.

Perhaps the most renowned figure associated with this tradition is María Sabina, a Mazatec *curandera* from Huautla de Jiménez. Through her ceremonies with sacred mushrooms, she became an international symbol of the deep spiritual knowledge held by indigenous peoples. “There is a world beyond ours, a world that speaks,” she once said, describing the voices she heard through the mushrooms. Though her story is complex—marked by reverence, cultural misunderstanding, and the influx of outsiders—María Sabina’s legacy continues to shape the way the world views Oaxaca’s spiritual relationship with fungi.

Beyond their ceremonial role, mushrooms also play a vital part in Oaxacan cuisine. During the rainy season, markets across the state come alive with baskets of freshly gathered mushrooms: *hongos de encino*, *setas de burro*, *nanches*, and the prized *hongo amarillo*. Each variety carries unique flavors and is prepared in soups, tamales, or simply sautéed with garlic and chile, showcasing the Oaxacan talent for elevating local ingredients. Alongside these wild mushrooms, Oaxacan cooks also treasure *huilacoche*, the dark, earthy fungus that grows on corn. Sometimes called the “Mexican truffle,” it is folded into tamales, sautéed with chile and onion, or stirred into soups, prized for its deep flavor and cultural significance. As one market vendor in Northern Oaxaca explains with pride: “Cada hongo tiene su secreto y su sabor. Aprenderlos es como aprender una lengua antigua”—“Each mushroom has its secret and its flavor. Learning them is like learning an ancient language.”



For many families in rural Oaxaca, mushroom gathering is also a way of life—a seasonal activity that teaches respect for nature and the forests that provide food and medicine. Elders pass down knowledge of which mushrooms are safe to eat, how to harvest them responsibly, and how they can heal the body or nourish the soul. This living heritage is celebrated most vibrantly in Huautla de Jiménez, where the Festival de los Hongos (Mushroom Festival) takes place every July. Visitors gather to taste

local mushroom dishes, join guided walks through the lush Mazatec forests, and participate in cultural events that honor the sacred and culinary value of fungi. The festival is both a celebration and an act of preservation—keeping ancestral wisdom alive while inviting respectful dialogue with the wider world.

Today, interest in Oaxaca’s mycological traditions is only growing. Researchers, chefs, and travelers come seeking knowledge from communities that have safeguarded this wisdom for generations.

Carrying this cultural thread into the present, the Huatulco Art Gallery is proud to host *Psilocybe mexicana*, an art exhibition celebrating the role of mushrooms in Oaxacan society. Opening on November 28th and 29th, 2025, and running for one month, the exhibition gathers a diverse group of artists whose work reflects the spiritual, ecological, and aesthetic dimensions of fungi. Featured artists include Tomás Pineda, Ixrael Montes, José Alberto Canseco, Irving Cano, Michelle Anderst, Manuel Trapiche, Abdías García Gabriel, Chilango en la Baja, Edna Guzmán, Chris Isner, Edwin Fierros, Paola Mar, Horacio Jiron, Miguel Jiménez, José Aquino Azúa, Albert Von Kitsch, Memo Malo, Ernesto Robles, Andrew Osta, Mario Hernández, Benjamín Sánchez, Liann Aranza León, Gustavo Silva, Michael Garroni, Caesar Rodríguez Martínez, Marco Cortes, Clove Guzmán, and Tania Guzmán.

With painting, sculpture, and mixed media works inspired by mushrooms, *Psilocybe mexicana* extends the conversation beyond the forest and the kitchen, into the realm of contemporary art. It reflects how the cultural legacy of fungi continues to inspire creativity and dialogue in Oaxaca today—linking tradition with innovation, the sacred with the modern, and the local with the global.

In Oaxaca, mushrooms remind us that tradition is alive in every season’s harvest. They are symbols of the profound connection between land, people, and spirit—an inheritance as rich and diverse as the forests themselves, and now also a source of inspiration for art and community in Huatulco.



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Kevin Knochel

Erin May

Brent May

Victoria Merino

Brent St Arnaud

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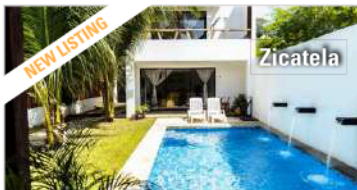
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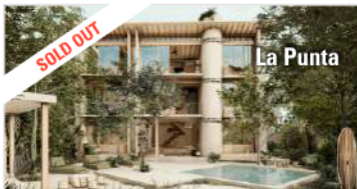
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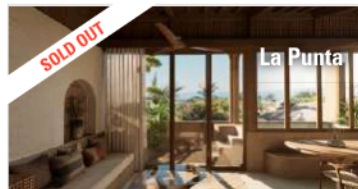
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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: A Deep Breath of Possibility

By Kary Vannice

Most of us accept that a little discomfort can make us stronger. A tough workout, a deep stretch, or even fasting for a day leaves us feeling more resilient once the body recovers. But the idea of locking yourself into a pressurized chamber, inhaling pure oxygen, and subjecting your body to more pressure than normal seems, well, intense. But with Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), that's precisely the point. By surrounding you with oxygen under pressure, it creates a challenge the body can't ignore. Instead of shutting down, your system wakes up — repairing tissues, calming inflammation, and turning on healing pathways that may have been idling for years.

At its core, HBOT is really about giving your body more of what it already knows how to use: oxygen. Under pressure, oxygen can slip deeper into the bloodstream and reach places it normally struggles to get to. Imagine a dry sponge finally soaking up water — tissues that have been starved or sluggish suddenly drink in the fuel they've been missing. That's why old injuries can finally start mending and tired muscles can feel alive again.

HBOT also encourages the body to grow new blood vessels, boosts collagen — the scaffolding that holds your skin, joints, and connective tissue together — and turns on the repair crews inside your cells. And it also calms inflammation, your bodies internal "fire alarm". The result is a body where balance is restored, movement feels easier, and healing picks up momentum.

Even more impressive, HBOT nudges your bone marrow to release stem cells, the body's own all-purpose repair team. Once they're set free into the bloodstream, they travel to sites of injury or wear and tear, ready to rebuild what's been damaged.

Another surprising benefit of HBOT is what it does for the brain. When your brain gets more oxygen, it's like opening the windows in a stuffy room — suddenly everything feels clearer, fresher, easier to move around in. People often report sharper memory, better focus, and improved mental energy after a series of treatments.

And this isn't just theory tucked away in medical journals — HBOT is being studied and used around the world with results that are hard to ignore. In Israel, researchers have shown that regular HBOT sessions can actually lengthen telomeres (the little caps on our DNA that shorten as we age) and reduce the number of "senescent" or worn-out cells. It's like hitting a refresh button at the cellular level, giving the body a younger profile than before. In the Netherlands, breast cancer survivors dealing with painful radiation damage found relief through HBOT, with studies showing less pain and more flexible, healthy tissue after a course of treatments.

China has been testing HBOT for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, and the results are promising — patients scored better on memory tests, showed improved brain blood flow, and even had signs of reduced inflammation. And across Europe, HBOT is being used in studies for long-COVID, where patients report clearer thinking, more energy, and better sleep.

Taken together, these studies show that hyperbaric treatment is more than an alternative, niche therapy.

Whether it's helping an athlete recover faster, supporting an older adult in staying sharper, or easing the long-term side effects of cancer treatment, hyperbaric oxygen therapy is proving its value across continents.

Here in Huatulco, we don't always have easy access to the most advanced medical technology, but hyperbaric oxygen therapy is one of those rare treatments that has found its way to our coast. Hyperbaric Huatulco opened its doors in the spring of 2025 in Santa Cruz Huatulco with a state-of-the-art chamber that holds 4 people.

For locals, it means support for things like stubborn wounds, injuries, or recovery after surgery. For visitors, it can be part of a wellness experience — a way to give the body a reset while soaking in the natural beauty of Oaxaca. And for anyone curious about living with more vitality, it offers a chance to explore a therapy that's showing impressive results worldwide without having to leave our own backyard.

In the end, Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment is really about giving the body a chance to do what it was designed to do — heal. With oxygen as its ally, the body remembers its own wisdom. And sometimes, that reminder is all it takes to feel stronger, clearer, and more alive.

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How Food Inspired Colonialism in the 15th Century

By Raveen Singh

It's amazing to think that the spices sitting quietly in our kitchens today were once rare treasures. Coriander, oregano, or even sea salt — things we take for granted — were, centuries ago, expensive luxuries. They were used as currency, to pay taxes, and even as dowries. They triggered piracy, battles, wars, and ultimately centuries of European colonialism and conquest — along with slavery, exploitation, and the destruction of entire societies.

Here's how the craving for flavor reshaped the world.

Before the Rise of the Ottoman Empire

Before the 13th century, the world was broadly divided into East and West. The Far East — today's India, Southeast Asia, and China — was separated from Europe by the Middle East. When the Roman Empire collapsed around 500 CE, Europe fragmented into feudal states, a period often called the Dark Ages.

Yet Rome had left behind one lasting habit: a taste for luxuries from the East. Silk, tea, and, above all, spices continued to flow westward along the Silk Road. Overland routes passed through Persia, Iraq, and Turkey before reaching Mediterranean traders. Arab merchants controlled the trade, selling Chinese silk, Indian spices, precious metals, and even horses at enormous markups.

Spices were so valuable they were treated like money. A pound of saffron could cost as much as a horse. In 1393, nutmeg was valued at seven fat oxen. Peppercorns were used to pay taxes and tolls; towns kept their accounts in pepper. Brides received pepper in their dowries. Charlemagne even ordered farmers to grow herbs like fennel, sage, thyme, and coriander.

The Silk Road carried more than goods — it spread religions, art, technology, and ideas. By the 13th century, explorers like Marco Polo described the spice-rich lands of Java, India's Malabar Coast, and the South China Sea, fueling Europe's hunger for direct access.

The Ottoman Roadblock

When Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, everything changed. The empire imposed heavy tariffs on goods passing through its lands. Maritime choke points like the Eastern Mediterranean and the Suez were also under Ottoman control. For Christian Europe, spices became harder and costlier to obtain. The solution?

Find another route.

The Eye 28



Portugal's Push Around Africa

Portugal led the way. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, proving the Atlantic and Indian Oceans were connected. Vasco da Gama reached India a decade later, opening the door to a direct maritime spice route.

The Portuguese established forts and outposts along Africa and into Asia, powered by advances in navigation and shipbuilding. By the mid-1500s, Lisbon had

become a hub for Asian spices, its empire stretching all the way to Nagasaki.

Spain's New World Accident

Spain, emerging from the Reconquista in 1492, turned to exploration as well. That same year, Christopher Columbus — sailing west in search of Asia — stumbled instead on the Americas. The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas divided the world between Spain and Portugal, with Spain claiming the western lands and Portugal much of the east.

Soon after, Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztecs, seizing gold and introducing Europe to new flavors like vanilla. Spanish conquests spread rapidly across the Americas, shifting focus from trade to colonization.

A Naval Race for Flavor

By the 16th century, five powers — Spain, Portugal, Britain, France, and the Netherlands — were racing to control trade routes. All relied on naval supremacy. For about 150 years, the Americas consumed much of their attention, but the spice trade remained the golden prize.

Portugal grew rich, but by the late 1500s, its overstretched empire came under attack from the Dutch, British, and French. Spain, flush with silver and gold from the New World, shifted its energy westward.

What tied them all together was the same obsession: the pursuit of flavor.

The Global Consequences

What began as a quest for pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg reshaped the globe. European empires carved up territories, enslaved millions, and wiped out entire societies in their hunger for spices, silk, tea, and gold.

Seen this way, the Age of Exploration wasn't just about adventure or discovery. It was about dinner. The next time you grind pepper onto your steak, remember: wars were fought, empires rose and fell, and lives were lost for that tiny spice. The flavors we sprinkle casually today once carried the weight of empires — and their shadows still shape our world.

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5 Kinds of Tacos—and When to Eat Them

By Alicia Flores

Mexico's national dish is so versatile it can be eaten at any time of the day, in any part of the country. But not all tacos are alike, and each type comes with its own history, flavor, and best moment to enjoy. Here are five essential styles of tacos and when to savor them.

1. Tacos de Guisado

These “stew tacos” are filled with home-style dishes like tinga de pollo (shredded chicken in chipotle sauce), rajas con crema (poblano peppers in cream), or chicharrón in salsa verde. Because they're hearty and comforting, tacos de guisado are a favorite midday meal, especially around lunchtime when you want something filling.



2. Tacos de Canasta

Also called “basket tacos,” these are pre-made, wrapped in cloth, and steamed in a basket to keep warm. Typically filled with beans, potatoes, or adobo-style meats, tacos de canasta are cheap, portable, and sold by vendors on bicycles or street corners. They're a classic choice for breakfast or a quick snack on the go—perfect for commuters rushing to work or students between classes.



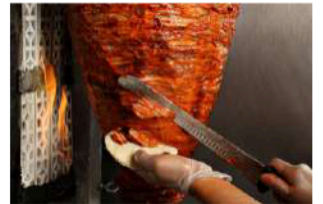
3. Fish Tacos

Born in Baja California and now beloved across Mexico, fish tacos are typically made with battered, fried fish topped with shredded cabbage, salsa, and a drizzle of creamy sauce. These light yet flavorful tacos shine at lunchtime, especially by the beach with a cold beer. They embody Mexico's coastal bounty and are a must for seafood lovers.



4. Tacos al Pastor

Perhaps the most famous taco of all, al pastor traces its roots to Lebanese immigrants who introduced the vertical spit-roasted method to Mexico. Marinated pork is shaved from the trompo, tucked into a tortilla, and topped with onion, cilantro, and pineapple. These tacos are best enjoyed late at night, when taco stands fire up after dark and the streets fill with hungry crowds looking for a midnight bite.



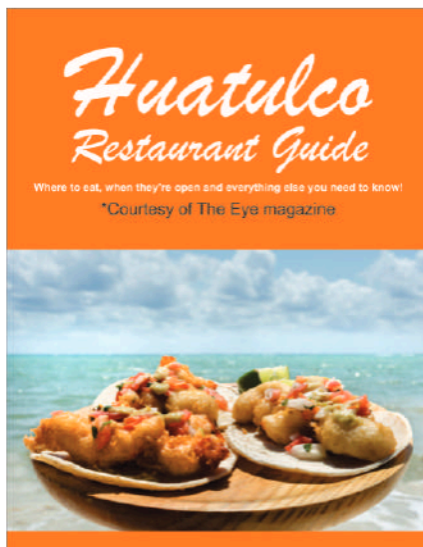
5. Barbacoa Tacos

Traditionally cooked underground with maguey leaves, barbacoa is slow-roasted lamb or beef that becomes tender, smoky, and juicy. Served on weekends, barbacoa tacos are a beloved Sunday breakfast, often paired with a warm consommé made from the drippings of the meat. It's the ultimate comfort food for family gatherings or to recover after a late Saturday night.



Check out our
Huatulco Restaurant Guide
on the website!

www.theeyehuatulco.com/huatulco-guides/



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to make sure we have your up to date info.

Do you have a favorite
place in Mexico?

What are the 5 things we can't miss?

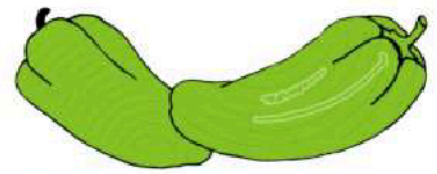
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