

A slice of La Esperanza's main street

Glossary

BEASTS

Lagartija- Flesh-coloured lizards which lived in our apartment and ate spiders and other insects. They make loud whooping noises followed by kisses before eating their prey (also called *besucón*, from *beso*, kiss).

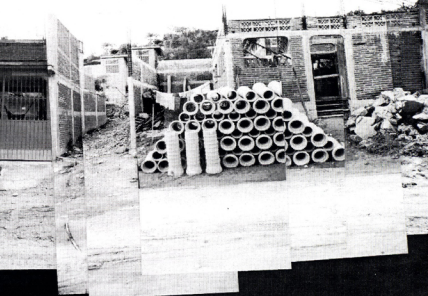
Minotaur- Luterio, the apartment building janitor who haunted the grounds and jumped out at us from behind bushes, brandishing cutters. His body resembled that of a Minotaur.

CATASTROPHIES

Ciclones- Wind that brings with it lots and lots of rain, changing the streets into flowing rivers. They caused huge waves to occur on the ocean. When the cyclones first began it was a good excuse for us to seek shelter with the residents of La Esperanza.

Cucarachas- 2.5 inch flying cockroach which visited us in our apartment one night.

Huracanes- Hurricanes, one of the many names for the wondrous summer weather on the coast.



Sismos- Earthquakes and more earthquakes. We determined that the normally lethargic Mexican dogs became loud and restless as a warning sign of an oncoming SISMO.

Terremotos- The first of the few earthquakes we've experienced in Zihuatanejo was the worst, frightening Aitor off his feet. The aftershocks were minor *temblores*.

Temblores- Shaking, trembling. "The Earthquakes."

THE CH'S

Chamaca/o- A young girl/boy.

Chamba- Boulot or McJob. A job to just get by.

Chambelanes- The young men dressed in matching clothing to accompany the *quinceañera* during the celebration.

Changarro- A small corner shop where one can buy groceries and soft drinks.

Chaparro- Short person.

Chapulines- Grasshoppers.

Chava/o- A young girl/boy.

Chicano- A Mexican that has emigrated to the USA.

Chilango- A native from Mexico City.

Chilindrina- A sweet bread and a popular cartoon character on TV; a freckled girl. Sukaina's nickname.

Chin-chin- Do not use this as a toast in Mexico!

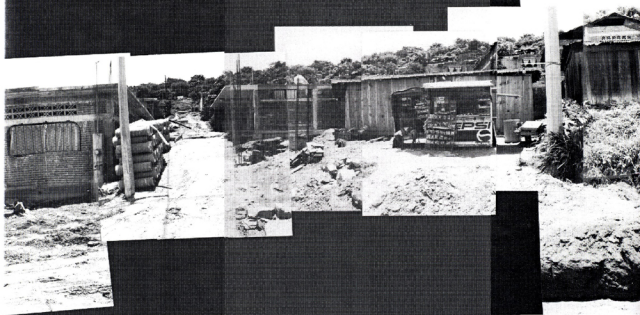
Chiquiliqui- A small crustacean similar to a shrimp, only with no tail and more legs. Chiquiliquis are fried for breakfast, if you can catch them in the sand just at the edge of the wave line. Laurel found a bunch in her beach bag that Jean-Maxime was trying to smuggle home to cook for lunch.

Chocoyota- The youngest daughter of the family.

Chucho- Nickname for Jesús, or Jesús Antonio.

Chuleta- Pork-chop.

Chupacabra- A mythical monster which roams the Mexican countryside terrorizing children and sucking dry the blood of goats. For some reason, the children do not seem to be scared of it, in fact, they seem quite pleased when you speak about it.



FOOD

Calabaza con leche- A warm piece of pumpkin, dipped into a thick, sweet sauce and served with a glass of milk at *El cheapo*.

Chicharrón- Fried pork skin. Delicious with salsa. Could be shocking, once you recognize the hairs.

Camote con leche- A warm sweet potato, dipped into a thick, sweet sauce and served with a glass of milk at *El cheapo*.

Langostino-langosta- The amazing lobster feast that Jean-Maxime, Aitor and Laurel had at Carlos's house on their last day in Zihuatanejo.

Mole verde- Thick, spicy sauce, green in color, served on a hot meal of chicken or meat.

Nopales- Edible leaf of a cactus plant.

Plátano con leche- A warm banana, dipped into a thick, sweet sauce and served with a glass of milk at *El cheapo*.

Pulpo- Octopus eaten at Carlos'. He gave us the leftovers, which some remained in our fridge and became Jean-Maxime's alien counterpart during the all-nighter.

Tacos- Rolled corn tortillas filled with chicken and vegetables, then fried and served in a bowl of chicken broth. One of our favourite meals at *El Cheapo's*.

Tamales- Meal with a mixture of corn dough with fruits or meat and vegetables with rice, wrapped in dry corn leaves.

Tirritas- Pescado Crudo- Fresh raw fish, mixed with a lot of salsa picante, lime, orange pop, green peppers, tomatoes, onions, and hot peppers. This delicious spicy meal is eaten with large crackers.

Tortillas- Corn pancake flattened by hand and cooked in a pan. Tastes best when eaten hot.

Tostadas- Taco chip covered with chicken, cheese and lettuce.

FRUITS AND DRINKS

Agua de Coco- Sandra's favourite drink, made with coconut milk.

Agua de Guayaba- Drink made with the guayaba fruit. Estrella's mother made the most delicious juice with this fruit that grew in her garden.



Agua de Piña Colada- *Agua fresca* made with pineapple juice and coconut milk.

Agua de Sandía- Sukaina's favorite drink, made with watermelon.

Agua fresca en bolsa- The delicious drinks we bought at La Michoacana; served in a clear plastic bag with a straw.

Atoles- Hot drink, thick in texture and quite sweet; of various flavors such as chocolate or tamarindo.

Guayaba- A small oval-shaped, yellow fruit, 1.5 in. in diameter, sweet, white interior with tiny pits.

Horchata- Delicious white drink made with rice, Juliette's favorite drink.

Jamaica- Refreshing beverage made with the leaves of the red hibiscus flower, infused into a tea, then cooled.

Mamey- A fruit, resembling the papaya in color, but potato shaped; used to make iced treats.

Mango- Delicious fruit which we always received as a gift while working in La Esperanza.

Naranja- Orange.

Papaya- The fruit of paradise; the juice of the papaya has special healing powers!

Piña- Pineapple.

Sandía- Water melon.

Tamarindo- A fruit, resembling a peanut where we must break the shell to eat the chewy and sticky fibres surrounding the two interior seeds.

Tunas- Edible fruit of a cactus leaf.

NICKNAMES

Corazón negro, Iraquí mala mujer- (black hearted, bad Iraqi woman) Luterio's favorite words, accompanied with chest beating and gestural bomb throwing whenever he saw Sukaina.

El Rey- The king, or Aitor.

Héctor- Mexican for Aitor.

La güera alta- The tall fair one, or Julieta.

La güera alta con gafas- The tall fair one with glasses, or Laurel.

La güera chaparrita- The short fair one, or Sandra.



La madrina- The godmother. Laurel was the honoured godmother during Jesús's kindergarten graduation.

La mexicana- The Mexican girl with a straw hat, Sarwat, although she did not speak Spanish.

Mamá gallina- Mother hen or Manuel during the first few days of our trip as he herded us from one site to the next, worrying whether or not we would survive Mexico.

Máximo- Jean-Maxime, Also nicknamed Maxin.

Sergio el bailador- A popular Mexican song. Also Sergio's nickname; "Serge the dancer".

PLACES

Canto de las Sirenas- Oasis in an asphalt desert. Song of the Sirens, a local bar, maybe the ONLY bar in Zihuatanejo, complete with local singing talent.

Carol- Restaurant where we ate every breakfast and lunch, and celebrated Juliette's birthday; usually referred to as "the Restaurant."

El cheapo- Antelia's- One of our favorite restaurants where we ate almost every evening. It was very inexpensive; we could get a full meal for 10-12 pesos (\$2.00- \$2.40 Canadian).

Hotel Canadá- Place where we stayed as we arrived to Mexico City, and recreated the sleeping conditions of La Esperanza during the last few days of our stay. We started with two in the bed, and by the end of the week, there were five of us.

La Michoacana- The juice store where we stopped, at least twice a day, to buy delicious *agua fresca en bolsa*, for only two pesos.

TRANSPORTATION

Vocho- Volkswagen Beetle. How many architecture students can you cram in one vocho? Nine. There were no more McGill architecture students available in Mexico City.

Combi- A little bus. Our means of transportation from Zihuatanejo to La Esperanza.



OTHER

Bajareque- Typical form of house construction, where a mixture of mud, straw and stones are used for the walls.

Cacique- The president of the community, a nickname for Don Faustino.

Cama- A bed.

Con confianza- Mrs. Arroyo Galeana's favorite expression when she welcomed us in her home.

Dedos de La Esperanza- The fingers of hope. Also known as the steel reinforcement bars sticking out of concrete structures. These present the owner's hope that they will someday have a second floor in their house.

Gilligan's Island- The Spanish dubbed version of this popular show, was played at the Maya woman's house.

Gringos- Americans; because of our fair skin, we were labelled as Americans until they knew who we were. On our first day to the Carol restaurant, the owner informed his wife that two Mexican girls (Sukaina, who is Iraqi,

and Sarwat, who is Pakistani) came to eat with their seven Gringo friends (one of whom was Manuel, the real Mexican).

Huesito- Dried palm leaves, used in the construction of houses.

Laberinto- The labyrinth of our apartment building was haunted by the minotaur. The labyrinth of Zihuatanejo; we often wondered if the Celtic knot tattooed on Serge's chest was the real map of the little town that we got lost in so many times.

Oh My God!!!!!!- Aitor's favorite, and only expression, followed by a long gaze, after experiencing the earthquakes.

Quinceañera- A young girl who becomes a woman on her fifteen birthday.

Reventón- A large gathering of people.

Shakira- Colombian Celine Dion. Aitor's torture method to wake Sukaina up in the morning was to blast Shakira's "Estoy Aquí" close to her ears.

Silos- Manholes. Many stuck out one meter from the ground. Still not in use.