

AJIJIC, MEXICO TRIP JANUARY 23-31, 2019

“AN ADVENTURE IN FOOD, ART, AND WALKING”

By Cindy Crane

Wednesday, January 23, 2019 ~ We got up @ 3am and left on our big journey @ 4am. Our Flight with United Airline left SWFL airport in Ft. Myers, Florida @ 7am for Houston where we got on another United Airlines flight from Houston to Guadalajara, Mexico. It was an uneventful trip and we arrived on time and got a taxi to take us down to Ajijic, Mexico for our visit with friends Tom & Leslie Doherty and Joel Eastman and Walter Murch.



Ajijic is a town about 3 miles from Chapala, part of a municipality also called Chapala in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. It is about an hour south of Guadalajara and is located on Lake Chapala, the largest lake in Mexico with an elevation of about 5,000 feet. It is surrounded by mountains and has a year-round “moderate” climate, which is much colder than Marco Island! Ajijic is a very artistic town and full of ex-pats from the US and Canada. This made it pretty easy to get around because most people spoke English as well as Spanish. Eddie and I had been trying to learn a little Spanish, but to date had only

learned the most important words, like for “Hello, Goodbye, Please, Thank You, Two cold beers, and Where is the bathroom?” Once we arrived in Ajijic, the taxi driver had a little trouble finding the house, but we finally found it in a nice residential neighborhood, where all of the houses have walls in front with gates into the courtyard.

We were so glad to see our friends and after a couple of cold beers, we started out on the first of our walks around town. The first thing that we saw were the horses who were tied up in a sort of courtyard in the middle of the residential area. I think that maybe the workers rode the horses to their workplace and left them here till the end of the workday. We went to a nice park/community center area where Joel has taken some yoga classes.

There were many cats here as well as some cool statues in among the flowering plants and trees. Ajijic is unique in that all the streets and sidewalks are made of

cobblestones, which took a little practice to navigate without twisting an ankle or falling. Most of the houses that we could see were modest, but neat. The buildings in town were all close or connected and painted bright colors. More impressive were the beautiful murals that were painted on many, many





must be avoided. Best to travel with a flashlight or at least the flashlight on your cell phone.

Thursday, January 24, 2019 ~ After a good night's sleep, we walked over to Mario's for a nice Mexican breakfast. Once again, we explored the town, enjoying the many murals, and the interesting landscaping. We went to Real de Chapala, a very nice resort right on the water. The lake seemed to be flooded which means that everywhere there were trees and sidewalks submerged in the water. We stopped by a bar right on the water for a few beers. This was next to the Malecon, which is a waterfront park we will explore later. Tonight, we had dinner @ Alex's Pasta House, which had excellent lasagna.

Friday, January 25, 2019 ~ After a breakfast in house, we walked back to the Malecon, the big waterfront park with Tom & Leslie. There were many kids here on skateboards, and bikes. This was interesting since most of the murals painted here were quite suggestive in nature. The skateboard park ended and we were now in another pretty park with lovely flowering hibiscus and tabebuia trees. There were many great statues, some of a Buddhist nature, some of a more pagan nature. The Mayan goddess of fertility was prominent. A man was



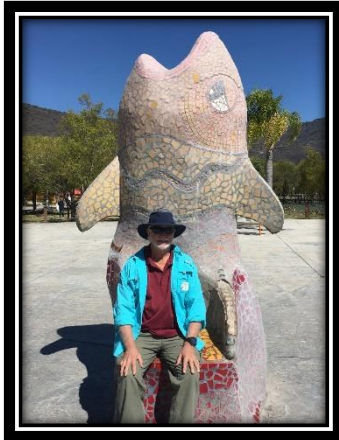
working on creating a Zen meditation walk. At the end of the park was a playground which was completely in the water. It was funny to see a little kid on the swings in the water. Walter & Joel joined us and we walked through the town to the big town center, enjoying the painted murals along the way. We had Margaritas at a second-floor pub overlooking the square. Dinner tonight was a Cocinart, where we enjoyed an excellent chicken curry. Joel is a vegan, but he has been able to find appropriate food at most of the restaurants.



Saturday, January 26, 2019 ~ After a breakfast in-house we took the bus to Chapala, the next town over, where we enjoyed walking through their Malecon park. Here we saw more of the big lake and tons of large white pelicans. We enjoyed the traditional Mexican entertainment where these men dressed in costume climb up to



the top of a pole and then swing around all the way to the bottom, upside down with a foot tied to a rope. This must be a special type of entertainment because we saw this a few times while in the area. We



walked over to the Beer Garden Restaurant and Bar where we had beers and a special treat of the waitress making us guacamole fresh at our table. Next, we took a very crowded bus ride to San Juan Cosala and had an excellent dinner at Viva Mexico. Sunset was along the Malecon where there were many great sculptures and beautiful big herons in the submerged trees. After the sunset we took the "Harry Potter Night Bus" back to Ajijic. Very exciting!!



Sunday, January 27, 2019 ~ Today after our breakfast we were picked up by Alex and his wife Luc for our trip to the town of Tequila. This was a very long ride and we were quite crowded in the car. We stopped at a restaurant along Calle Jose Cuervo for another excellent Mexican meal and we saw where Cholula, the excellent hot sauce, is made. Next, we went into the main town for our Tequila Tour. Our



guide spoke mostly Spanish so he had our little group sit in the front of the bus. He would say one sentence to us in English, then talk for ten minutes in Spanish to the other guests. The tour buses were so cute, in the shapes of a wooden beer barrel, a silver bottle of Tequila, and a huge green hot chili pepper. Our tour took us out to one of the agave farms and then into the Tequila factory where we saw the huge

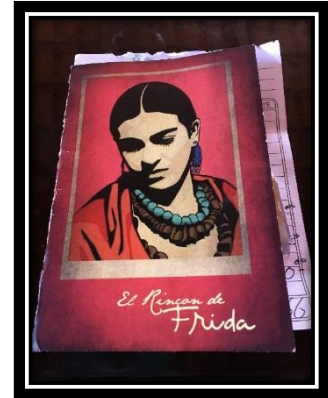
bins of harvested agave and we even went up to the big vats where the fermentation took place. The tour ended with a Tequila tasting where we had 3 different kinds, based on alcohol content and age. We learned that with the cheaper, newer Tequila you should put salt on your hand, lick the salt, swig the Tequila, and then suck on a slice of lime. For the more expensive, aged Tequila, you used only a slice of



orange. On the way back home, we stopped at Jardin de Nanette, where we had excellent Hungarian goulash. After our meal we walked back home.



Monday, January 28, 2019 ~ This morning we had breakfast with Tom at Pranzo, a cute little place that the local ex-pats frequent. We all then took another local bus into Jocotepec. This was an interesting ride as the bus weaved its way through the incredibly narrow streets picking up locals along the way. Once we arrived, we walked through the park to Rincon de Frida for beers. There were beautiful paintings by Frida Kahlo here and lots of beautiful cats



too. We took the long, long walk through a bad part of town until we arrived at the town square where there was a beautiful church. All of the churches in the area are quite beautiful and ornate inside. We stopped for drinks and guac at La Caretta Carne Assad. We finally took another bus back to Ajijic. After this trip, Cindy's stomach was not well, so she stayed in bed and very close to the bathroom. Everyone else walked the long distance to another restaurant, but they could not get in so they had takeout pizza.

Tuesday, January 29, 2019 ~ Cindy rested in bed while Tom, Leslie and Ed went out for their breakfast walk. Walter and Joel left early for a bus to Guadalajara for another walking adventure. The three of them went to Adelita for a rib dinner and brought some home for Cindy.

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 ~ This morning Tom, Ed, and Cindy had breakfast again at Pranzo where they make excellent French toast! Then we walked through a local market where Cindy did some shopping. We came home and packed for our trip back. Dinner tonight was once again at Adelita where we had excellent burgers.



Thursday, January 31, 2019 ~ After a good night's sleep we took taxis into the Guadalajara airport where we had our last beers while waiting for our flights back home. Unfortunately, the airport is all that Ed & Cindy got to see of Guadalajara! We took a United flight (through Mesa Airlines) to Houston and then another flight to Ft. Myers. We arrived home to Marco Island around midnight.

This trip has been very interesting in that we got to explore a region and town that we had never heard of before. It was certainly a friendly town full of ex-pats, great food, great art-both in the galleries and on the exterior walls. Our little hacienda was very comfortable and quaint, even though it was much colder than we are used to! The cobblestone streets took some getting used to and we won't miss that part. The buses are easy to ride and very inexpensive. But the best part was that we got to spend some good quality time with great friends.

