



## **Beach Reads**

*News from Alma Libre Bookstore - Puerto Morelos, Mexico*  
Issue #3 - March 2003

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### **News From Puerto Morelos**

It's the "season" in Puerto Morelos! January was a little chilly by Mayan Riviera standards (blame El Nino) but February & March have brought sunshine and blue skies back to our town. It appears "winter" is over in Puerto Morelos! (and I never had to plug the truck in)

February was so nice that the newsletter was put off to manana to manana to manana and finally to March, so you didn't miss

the newsletter in February, this is it. These things happen when the beach is just too close and the weather is just too nice!

The town has been pretty peaceful, as it always is, except for a few festivals here and there. A memorable one was a weekend long party celebrating the reef and the wetlands. Hundreds of people snorkeled the reef and cleaned the beach all day. At night the kids danced to the loudest music this reporter has ever heard in his life. We had to shout in the bookstore to be heard. Some nights if I close my eyes I can still hear that dance music pounding in my head! I assume they were trying to play it loud enough so the fish could hear it out at the reef. No word on how they liked it.



### Our Ship Has Come In!

At Alma Libre we had the fortunate problem of running out of several of our new books, especially the ones on area fish and mammals. We placed an emergency order which we have just received. We now have loads of books on the Maya, Mexican history, Mexican & Yucatan travel guides and books focusing on the unique wildlife & sea life in our area.

Orders were placed from book suppliers all over the US and sent to Miami where they were placed on a ship that steamed right into Puerto Morelos. It wasn't easy, it wasn't quick and it wasn't cheap, but we are very

happy to have new books on the shelves. Come and see our new selection!

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### News Briefs

**Mama's Bakery** is open for breakfast on Sunday! (9am to 1pm)

You've vacationed here, now why not live here! **Cabanas Puerto Morelos** is for sale and the price has been reduced.

[Check out this website for details.](#) It even comes with a boat! I call that instant lifestyle, just add Jimmy Buffet music and chill!

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### General Mexico Travel Tips

A random assortment of general tips that will help you get more out of your trip down South.



**Learn a few simple Spanish phrases** – Just knowing to say Buenos Tardes in the afternoon and Buenos Dias in the morning will get you a long way in Mexico. It's always handy to have a few complimentary phrases like "La comida es muy bien" when you really enjoy your meal. Be complimentary! I once told a chef how much I was enjoying his fresh dinner rolls, and I was rewarded with a lifetime supply.

**Keep your hands clean** – We believe this could wipe out 90% of the cases of "turista". Wash whenever you have an opportunity and always before meals, before you dig into that complimentary bowl of nacho chips you were just given! We carry disposable wipes or hand gel with alcohol wherever we go and use it generously. Also, take it easy. So many tourists eat too much, wash it all down with buckets of margaritas and cervezas, then stay out in the sun all day. When they inevitably get ill, they say it must have been the water! Ridiculous! The

sun especially can make you very sick, as well as give you the look of a fully cooked lobster, so watch yourself when in direct sun.

**Get Out of your Resort!** – The vast majority of people that land at Cancun airport are picked up by little busses and driven directly to their sprawling resorts where they stay for seven days. Then little busses return and take them back to the airport and they fly home. Have they really been to Mexico? Did they meet any Mexican people aside from the bartender? Did they sample any Mexican food, except on "fiesta night" when the waiters donned sombreros? There is nothing wrong with enjoying the comfort of a beautiful resort, just make sure you get out once in a while.

You can rent a car, or just wander out to the highway and grab a bus. The "Real" Mexico is right at the end of the driveway. Dive in!

**Pack an Open Mind** – You are going to a completely different country with a different culture. The way that some of the things are done down here will astound and or confuse you. Be patient. Resist the attitude that everything at home is done correctly and everything here is done wrong. There is a proud culture here. Be sensitive to that.



**Keep your Eyes Open** – For two reasons: One is safety. Uneven pavement, crazy curbs, holes, low hanging signs, ropes strung across the sidewalk at neck level. A dozy tourist is an injured tourist. The other reason is to catch those uniquely Mexican sights. In our area there are up to 200 species of birds. We have an incredible variety of lizards passing through our back yard and some other things we have had to run to the bookstore to identify. Then there are my favourite sights. A man riding a bicycle, carrying a full size extension ladder. A man NOT selling tamales in the square, because he is fast asleep. A tiny elderly Mayan woman in her colourful hand-made dress carrying twice her weight in colour-coded shopping bags. She will smile big if you say "Buenos Tardes" as you pass. Keep your eyes open! Some of the most memorable sights in Mexico have no admission fee!

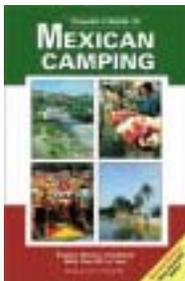
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### This Just In! New Books & Products at Alma Libre - Books!



#### **The People's Guide to Mexico - 30th Anniversary Edition**

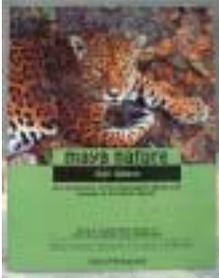
So much more than a guidebook, The People's Guide should be required reading for travel in Mexico. Carl Franz tells you *how* to see Mexico rather than *what* to see. Full of useful information and stories from the road, it is also a fun and entertaining read. This is the 30th anniversary edition, newly updated and now includes suggested itineraries.



#### **Traveler's Guide to Mexican Camping - Mike & Terri Church**

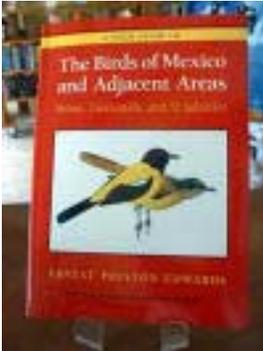
The mere fact that I am writing this from Puerto Morelos is testimony as to the usefulness of this book. Worth the price just for the border crossing information. The all new second edition includes GPS co-ordinates. As a rookie RV'er, this book told me everything I needed to know to navigate my rig through Mexico, except how to back up...which I have yet to learn.

*We also have these books in abundance now thanks to our recent shipment...*



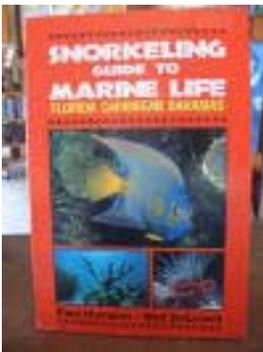
**Maya Nature : An Introduction to the Ecosystems, Plants and Animals of the Mayan World**

At last we have found a book that covers the unique life that you will find only in the Maya world. Featuring 196 color photographs of the flowers, birds, invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, and mammals found in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Many are on the endangered species list. The photographer & author, Thor Janson, has taken almost impossible shots of various animals. An absolutely beautiful book we are proud to have in the shop. Excellent souvenir & keepsake of your trip.



**The Birds of Mexico and Adjacent Areas** by Ernest Preston Edwards

Okay, we admit it is not a very catchy title for a book, but it is the best book to identify all the birds in the Yucatan. Features more than 850 species in a convenient, easy to carry guide.



**Snorkeling Guide to Marine Life** by Paul Humann & Ned DeLoach

The best guide to identify what lives in the Caribbean Sea. Features 280 colour photographs of everything you might see on your next snorkeling trip including fish, coral and plants. Also includes valuable tips about which plants and animals should be approached with caution, how to treat stings, and other interesting facts. ***We also now have a mini version that is waterproof, so you can take it with you underwater! Maps!***



Gui Roji if you have spent any time in Mexico, you know how difficult it is to get a good map. We had been coming down here for four years before we found the Gui Roji Road Atlas. This 144 page atlas features detailed maps, city maps & detailed breakdowns of major routes. **It has just been updated for 2003!** It's now available in a smaller form. We are also carrying their new map of the Maya world of Mexico that includes information on the archeological sites.

**Postcards!** We have the largest selection of postcards of Puerto Morelos, and they are all exclusive to Alma Libre. We know because we make 'em!

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## Winter...what winter?

We missed winter this year...that is to say, we skipped it. We haven't missed it a bit!

Here's what we haven't missed:

Plugging in the car.

Scraping the windshield.

Losing my gloves...again!

People saying "cold enough for you?"

Shoveling snow

Dressing in layers

Wearing a touque, giving me strange looking hair for the rest of the day.

Big heating bills (still can't find the furnace in my place...)

The sad thing though is that our blood has thinned greatly since we left Calgary. One night it went down to 22C (72F) and we needed sweaters! (With the Wind Chill Factor it felt like 20C (68F))

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Just a reminder that we are in our seasonal hours now. That is Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am until 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Sunday 4:00 to 9:00. These are our minimum hours, we usually open earlier and close a little later. Our hours are always posted on the front page of our website at [www.almalibrebooks.com](http://www.almalibrebooks.com).

After Easter we will close one more day a week so we can do some traveling! We will close the store in early June, returning in October.

We take trades every day, so our selection is constantly changing. If you are planning a trip down, why not bring some recent bestsellers to trade and check out our store.

We look forward to seeing you in Puerto Morelos!

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Beach Reads is the official newsletter of Alma Libre Bookstore in Puerto Morelos Mexico.

[www.almalibrebooks.com](http://www.almalibrebooks.com)

This is issue #3. It was supposed to come out in February, but we went to the beach instead.

Sorry.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us.

Retransmission & Redistribution of this newsletter without express written consent is just fine by us!