

A Carnival cruise ship docks in Ensenada

Photo by Darryl Brooks / Shutterstock



Don't Waste The Liquid Gold!

A Water Watch Series

BY MARTINA DOBESH

"People hate to waste stuff. We think wasting is just wrong," stresses Jim Glynn, a local resident of Bajamar. He

has memories of actually living in Colorado at the very headwaters of the now disappearing river. He was a freelance



copywriter for an ad agency hired to bring attention to water conservation several decades ago. Glynn shared a 2002 headline from the *NY Times*, "Drought conditions have grown so severe in Denver that for the first time in a quarter-century water restrictions have been imposed throughout the metropolitan area. Successive winters of minimal snowfall followed by hot summers have forced local officials to issue new guidelines for washing cars, watering lawns and even flushing toilets. A cheeky new advertising campaign to raise awareness of water problems features signs around town advising residents to *"Brush every other tooth," "Only wash the stinky parts" and "Shower in groups."*

Glynn did a fast forward to 2006, saying, "Denver Water
CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Life on Five Gallons Per Day

It can be Done

BY GEORGIA TANNER

Five gallons of water, that is. A sacred element we cannot live without, not even for a few days.

From 2001 through 2007 I lived full time on the northern Gulf of California, AKA Sea of Cortez. Dwellings on the strip of coast from San Felipe to Puertecitos were self-contained. No one was at the mercy of a centralized energy grid.

The awareness of being in a remote desert place makes respect for water mandatory.

Many surf safaris down the Baja peninsula from 1966 to 1980 taught me to limit fresh water to one gallon per day. I decided to find out how much more than that I was actually using at my solar house 30 miles south of San Felipe.

I had 400 gallons of slightly brackish well water trucked in to fill two tanks. My small unfinished frame-and-board house was perfect for calculating water use. It's gray-water plumbing was two buckets,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Que Pasa In Baja?

BY OLIVER QUINTERO



Elevated Train Announced. Governor Marina del Pilar announced a new electric elevated train, called Skytren Baja, that will travel 13.5 miles in its first stage, going from the San Ysidro border, passing through Tijuana and ending in Rosarito beach. In a second stage the

start construction in 90 days in Baja.

The company has already announced that kids under 4 and seniors over 60 will ride for free.

Baja Wins National Beach Fishing Championship. After competing against different Mexican states, the

the Baja California team won its place in the Pan-American Beach Fishing Championship that this year will also be held in Mazatlan.

Health Authorities Warn Against Rickettsia. After the health department confirmed that a baby died in Ensenada

water.

After that it is recommended to use special medications on the animal to make sure that every one of the ticks is killed, while also fumigate the area where the pet lives.

Punta Colonet Port Reactivated. After over ten years of being cancelled, the Punta Colonet Port has been reactivated by the state and federal government.

The project was initially proposed by President Felipe Calderon in 2010, which started a war between national and international developers which were interested in the taking over the project. The port had a side project of a train that would go from Punta Colonet to the US border, in order to make the port "the little brother" of the Long Beach port in California.

Baja Produces 75% of Mexican Wine. The president of ProVino Baja California, a local winemaker's organization, stated that Baja Californian wines account for 75% of the national production, and 1% of the net income from agriculture in Mexico.

He also stated that wine tourism is bringing in about 180 million USD every year, and its increasing.

One of the factors greatly helping wine sales, was that in 20 years national consumption increased from a quarter

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train will connect with the Guadalupe Valley.

The investment will be in charge of Jeca Railway Corporation, which will pour from 2 to 3 billion USD in the completion of the project, which will have 12 stations.

Jeca announced that they already have working trains in Mexico City and Nuevo Leon and that

the project is expected to

Baja California beach sport fishing team won the national championship that was held in Mazatlán this past weekend.

The absolute winner was Guadalupe Acosta Noriega, who accumulated the most points, between the other competitors from Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Jalisco, Nayarit, Sonora, and Sinaloa.

With these mighty results,

because of rickettsia, sickness transmitted by ticks, they issued a warning to citizens to check their dogs for ticks.

They recommended a careful inspection of pets and in case of detecting ticks, use tweezers and heavy-duty gloves to remove them, and to not remove them with bare hands. After removing them, they have to be placed in a container with chlorinated

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Who's to blame:

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liter to almost a liter per person, per year.

Rosarito-Ensenada Bicycle Ride Coming This Month. Over 15 thousand persons are expected to visit Rosarito and Ensenada this coming September 24 for the Rosarito-Ensenada famous bicycle ride. Over 5,000 riders have already signed up for this sports activity. 🚲

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What Mexico Has Taught Me

BY THE UNKNOWN GRINGO



There's a classic book on Mexico written by Lesley Byrd Simpson from 1941 called Many Mexicos where she makes the point that so many others have also made; that there is more than one Mexico because of Nature's natural barriers, the differences in climates, and the long distances from one distinct area to another. The country is physically divided by two massive mountain ranges running north and south - the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental. The northern third of the country is quite dry and mostly rural. The central plateau gets more rain and has the second largest city in the world at over 7,300 ' in

elevation. The southern third is wetter still and densely lush. The country has two peninsulas. One, the Baja, was thought to be an island for decades by the Spanish and is fairly isolated from the mainland. Nature forced the creation of dozens of different cultures in Mexico that exist to a great extent today. And relatively small north-western Baja itself shows great diversity as well.

I get out a Baja map and look at Tijuana / Rosarito, glance down to Ensenada, then up through the Guadalupe Valley to Tecate, then back over to Tijuana, and basically see a triangle. And a small one at that. And in that triangle you get a huge city with a small city

adjacent to it, a medium sized city on a bay, a rural valley of vineyards, and a small town by itself. Plus ranches, villages and an ocean all in one. With a tremendous diversity to experience.

I've ridden my bicycle down Avenida Revolucion in Tijuana and felt surrounded by a culture different than my own. Loud. Colorful. BIG. And yet I only have to travel a few miles to eat freshly caught fish cooked under a tarp sitting on the beach at Popotla to sense a whole different world. I've watched the big parade at Carnaval in Ensenada surrounded by thousands of happy people and said to myself "This is the best day of the year." Gone

What To Do If You're Stopped By The Police

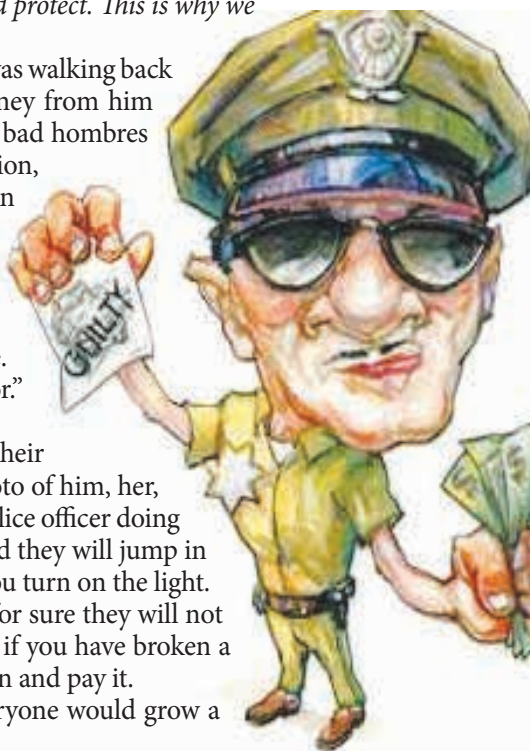
Ed Note. We have received comments from the local community asking us what do we have against the local police force. The answer is nothing, there are several great elements among the force, but unfortunately it is also common to find cases like the one we report below, specially with tourists or expats, which we feel is part of our duty to educate and protect. This is why we print this note on every edition of the Gringo Gazette.

We recently got a report from a local Gringo who was walking back home and a police cruiser stopped him and took money from him to let him go. That's extortion anywhere, and there are bad hombres anywhere. If you are stopped for an alleged traffic violation, ask for a ticket and go down to the police station later on or the next day, and pay it. They will take your driver's license to ensure that you show up, and that's OK. They do not want your license, and there's nothing they can do with it. You will get it back. And no, do not give them money if they ask you to pay the ticket to them right there. Just keep asking for a ticket, "Dar may un teeket por favor." Be polite and firm.

If they get nasty, write down their last name from their name badge, or pull out your cell phone and take a photo of him, her, or them. No, it's not illegal to photograph or record a police officer doing it's job. That's like holding a mirror up to a vampire, and they will jump in their vehicle and scurry away like cockroaches when you turn on the light.

It's extremely rare for them to write a ticket, and for sure they will not cite you when you haven't done anything wrong. And, if you have broken a law, the ticket is ridiculously small. Man up and fo down and pay it.

This police extortion would stop in a week if everyone would grow a back bone and stand up to them. ✎



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to La Bufadora early in the morning on a city bus to have the blowhole almost to myself. Wakened to the tamale woman with her steaming boxes on a hand cart calling out "TAMALES" in front of the Hotel Villa Fontana Inn on Saturday morning and rushed out of my room to get a cheese and chile tamale while the hotel desk clerk yells "TAMALES" out the back door of the lobby to let the maids know she's there. The hotel staffs for several hotels on First Street look forward to her showing up. Contrast that

with the elegant, upscale restaurants and beautiful places to stay in while you enjoy the best wine in Mexico in the Guadalupe Valley. Or have some of the best ceviche in the world off the La Guerrerense cart. Or the outdoor Saturday market in Tecate where they cook large, whole pork skins to make chicarrones in huge metal cauldrons that look so medieval that even the locals take videos of it to impress their friends. There are many Mexicos in just that triangle.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Cooking Like a Mexican

BY ALEJANDRA BORBOLLA



Mexican National Holidays are right around the corner, which brings out the best in our food, especially the most exquisite, sophisticated dish in Mexican cooking: Chiles en Nogada. This is hands down my favorite dish and the one I'm the pickiest about, knowing the work that comes with it. I have prepared this dish (and I would never do it again); it was a 12-hour marathon in the kitchen and is one of my fondest memories with my mother, who at first refused to help but ended up in the kitchen with me. It's a bonding dish, a very hard one, and requires tons of patience and love but is the most rewarding thing anyone can cook. I personally say that whoever can make chiles en nogada properly can do anything. The flavor that comes from combining sweet, sour, salty and bitter makes the tongue and palate sing. The original recipe calls

for more than 100 ingredients. Nowadays, there are many versions but still not as extensive as the original one, which has sadly, been lost, and one of the main ingredients can and should no longer be found, but I will get to that later. However, I searched for the closest one to the real deal with grandma's tips included.

Chiles en Nogada season is only three months long. Whoever says anything different is lying. I know. Science has come a long way to bring ingredients all year long, but still, this dish can only be made and served July, August and September, when the ingredients are traditionally in season and at their prime in flavor.

You know how Champagne can only be made in Champagne France, Parmigiano-Reggiano in Parma Italy, etc.? Well, chiles en Nogada used to be made only in Puebla, Mexico. Some of the

ingredients like chiles, walnuts, peaches, pomegranate, pears, apples and acitrón (bishop's weed) can only be found in that state because of the species but modern life has pushed us to use regular species for the same ingredients, thus achieving a very close copy of the flavor.

Acitrón comes from biznaga, a big, round cacti I'm sure you've seen at least in pictures. It is now a protected species because

about the appearance of chiles en Nogada in Mexican cuisine, but it is definitely known that the year they appeared was 1821. Some versions say that chiles en nogada appeared around the time of Agustin de Iturbide -- Mexican army general and politician. During the War of Independence, he built a successful political and military coalition that took control in Mexico



it was so popular and used in so many dishes and candies it was over-exploited and became nearly extinct; it took a very long time to grow. Before it got to that point, the cacti was peeled, the pulp chopped in big chunks and covered in a thick syrup made up of 70% sugar, and baked.

There are different stories

City on September 27th, 1821, decisively gaining independence for Mexico. After the secession of Mexico was secured, he was proclaimed President of the Regency in 1821. A year later, he was announced as the Constitutional Emperor of Mexico, reigning briefly from 19 May 1822 to 19 March 1823. He is credited as the original designer of the first Mexican flag, and signed the Independence Act and the Cordoba treaties. Santa Monica Convent nuns, the Augustine sisters, are often claimed as the masters behind this dish. When they found out Iturbide was coming to town; it is said that they prayed for inspiration for a main dish that was worthy of being up to huge celebratory standards.

A little add-on to this story is that the first chile en nogada must be served on Saint Augustin's fete on August 28. Mexico has always been a very fervent Catholic country, and Iturbide's arrival from Veracruz to Puebla

conveniently fell on the same day as the Saint's party. It must be mentioned that the shortest way from Veracruz to Mexico City, (where all the important stuff always happened) was through Puebla.

Coincidentally, or maybe not so, the civil celebration for Iturbide signing the treaties was the same as Iturbide's birthday, on September 27th. He was led to believe that the dish was made especially for him, which is complete BS, since the dish was made a month before. The only difference is that someone had the bright idea to decorate it like the first Mexican flag for Iturbide, who designed it.

Some people say that the colors of this dish were chosen by the sisters for a very good reason. Some others say the symbolism was added years later to give it a deeper, more heartfelt meaning and as an effort to raise patriotism.

Green: independence and hope; a band of parsley is added rich in A, B2, B6, C and E vitamins.

White: Catholicism and unity; the walnut sauce is almost white, rich in folic acid and vitamins.

Red: the blood shed by those who fought for the country; pomegranate seeds are the perfect complement. They have a high manganese content.

A completely different story is that in Agustin de Iturbide's regime there were three soldiers who had girlfriends in Puebla. The ladies wanted to welcome them with a special dish that had the colors in their uniforms, which had the first Mexican flag's colors on them and they didn't want to refer to their momma's recipe books. They prayed to the Rosary Virgin and Saint Pascal for enlightenment got cooking and the result was chiles en

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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DON'T WASTE THE LIQUID...

continued from page 1

decided we needed to reduce water consumption by 22% in ten years. Otherwise we'd be right back in the same unsustainable boat." One of his fellow ad men had an epiphany, "People don't want to conserve, because they hate giving up something they had. They will fight you tooth and nail over it." Jim goes on to say, "So our conservation angle was dead to us. But there is something people will get behind. And this is a key distinction that is pretty universal." He recalls a memory of the mess hall on a Navy ship. They didn't tell you to conserve food, just don't waste it." The ad campaign grew out of this idea, **Use only what you need.** The agency "hammered" out the idea and in three months Denver water reported a 21% reduction in water consumption. "What they wanted to accomplish in ten years took us three months."

So, why is Jim's story important? First it shows how early the "crisis" was heading our way. Secondly, because

the Colorado River system is the life blood for Baja California, receiving 80% of it was allotted by a 1944 Treaty with the US. Unfortunately there is not a big ad campaign here to bring this idea to the coastal communities. Nor, it would seem does the state of California north of us has yet to share the burden of the cuts coming to us in January 2023. Finally, a few months ago, headlines in the LA Times began to reflect the reality. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California declared a water shortage emergency; typically they are going after the farmers to reduce by 5%, instead of the rich and famous of Hollywood. Here is just one example of water guzzling in a star studded section of Los Angeles. Actor Sylvester Stallone's estate has been receiving "Notices of Exceedance." The estate used 533% over the allocated budget which is an excess of 230,000 gallons per month. The article in the Times did not state what a "normal" allocation was for Stallone. Jim Glynn reported, "People with a lot of money were one of the hardest groups we tried to convince. They figured if they paid

for it they weren't wasting it!"

La Mision received their first official water shut off in August. One board member is frustrated with the "water hogs" who pay the penalty fee easily. The community went without water, because of a few. But this is an example of "my water" thinking and is being played out on a much bigger scale in all seven states. It is an old way of thinking which is being forced to change. La Saline has been importing water by truck for years and Ensenada residents still can go a month without city water. Concerns from the Guadalupe Valley are that most wineries are still "pulling water out of the ground, and not paying attention to gray water recycling." The vintner flatly stated, "This cannot be sustained." As the old saying goes, "Talk is cheap" and there is a lot of that going on. Years waiting for a desal plant to be funded and built doesn't help anyone today or even several years from today. As water gets scarcer, water theft will become more common. *Gringo Gazette* reported on Hotel Calafia being caught and shut down for misappropriating water. Beginning to see our water as liquid gold running out of our garden hoses or down our kitchen sinks is the new paradigm.

A number of voices all working for a shared outcome in the future were heard throughout August. Tanya Trujillo, the Interior Department's assistant secretary for Water and Science said, "In order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of the Colorado River System and a future of uncertainty and conflict, water use in the Basin must be reduced." The International Boundary and Water Commission released, Colorado River Drought updated with some pretty bad news. The United States and Mexico are working in partnership on additional water conservation measures to bolster storage, and further protect critical elevations in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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LIFE ON FIVE GALLONS...

continued from page 1

one under the kitchen sink and the other under the bathroom sink. This captured water could be used for flushing the RV-style toilet and cleaning up. One and one-half gallons in a solar-heated black bag gave me a hot shower in the winter. In summer after twilight I could hang the unheated bag under the big palapa by the sea and take a cool shower and watch lightning streak through monsoon clouds on the other side of the Gulf.

Rain seldom came to the Baja side but it did come: as brief and wild chubascos, as flooding downpours from hurricanes Nora and Rosa (1997 and 2019), as steady winter "equipatas," so named for the sound they make, like horses' hooves.

In my experiment, filling a variety of small containers made it easy to measure water for the requirements of living. When my water use was added up and averaged out over one year, it came to five gallons per day. I didn't need to include drinking water in those calculations because it came from the sea.

What gave me self-reliance and peace of mind were two 2' x 3' tilted-tray solar distillers. Each one produced a half-gallon on a sunny day, which

was almost every day on the Sea of Cortez. Whether I used sea water or well water from the tanks, the result was one gallon of pure "aqua dulce," sweet water, charged by the energy and colors of the sun.

Unlike most stovetop distillers, solar distillers do not boil water. They vaporize the source water and leave contaminants behind in the basin while the vapor condenses on the underside of the slightly slanted glass and out to a glass collection bottle. With distillation, contaminants left behind include but are not limited to

monsoon rains. During those rare events, containers lined up under the edge of the roof gave me additional fresh water. If the house had been built with a real water catchment system, its 1000-square-foot roof would catch about 550 gallons per inch of rain. Imagine the amount that inch would produce from the roof of a 250,000-square-foot superstore, e.g. a Walmart. 250,000 divided by 1000 equals 250 times 550 equals 137,000 gallons!

Unusual storms during the winter of 2004-5 made the des-

flowers, jackrabbits, coyotes, and bees. I covered the stills and left on a two-day supply run and returned to find the stills full of dead bees. I had forgotten to put a screen on the end of the overflow tube.

As time went on my daily water routine became as natural as breathing. In the morning I filled the solar stills with tide pool water and after sunset collected the day's agua dulce. It seemed a kind of miracle that my survival was connected to a source that contains 97 percent of the earth's water mass. Ours is an ocean planet. 🐝

Martina Dobesh wrote about in the May 9th issue of the Gazette. I'm not done exploring. Not by a long shot. I've always considered that being bored is one of the worst things that can happen to you. Maybe it's inevitable while you are in line at the DMV, but it's never happened to me in Mexico. And won't. 🐝

COOKING LIKE A MEXICAN...

continued from page 4

nogada.

Which is the real story? Who



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To get this purity, materials used for a solar still must not be prone to gassing off or otherwise contaminating the product water. Food-grade silicone, glass, and stainless steel are the preferred and proven materials for all parts that touch water.

Besides ocean water, the other free water I might collect was water from winter or

ert bloom. Heavy rains on the coasts of California and Baja Norte joined with moisture from the south and reached the northern Gulf Cloudy days reduced solar production but the "water catchment system" worked beautifully. First storm: five gallons. Second storm: three gallons. Third storm: seven gallons. Unhappily, those gallons were all caught INSIDE the house, but I could add them to the many more gallons of roof runoff. So much rain that winter made the desert come alive with

WHAT MEXICO HAS TAUGHT...

continued from page 3

What have I not seen so far in that amazing triangle that I know I want to do? Go to the Russian Valley hot springs at the end of the road that goes by the LA Cetto winery in the Guadalupe Valley. Visit the famous museums and art exhibitions in Tijuana. Go to the canyon that has a stream and natural pools off the free road near La Mision. And visit the horse rescue ranch that

knows? The bottom line is, the essence of the recipe has been kept throughout the years and it is now a part of our heritage, known worldwide.

For the stuffing:

5 Poblano peppers (Read below for instructions)

½ pound of pork loin, chopped in small pieces, almost ground

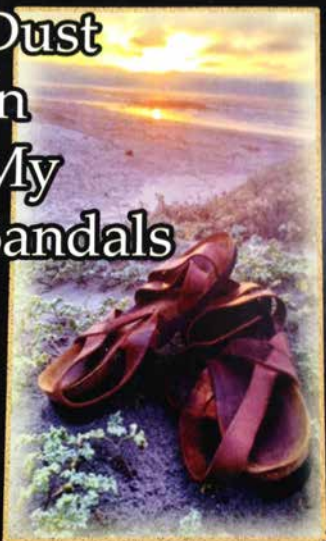
½ pound of beef, chopped same as pork

1 big, mature brown pear, chopped

1 big, mature apple, chopped

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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Mexican Wines Raze at World Contest

BY DAVID FLORES

A total of 71 medals, of which 23 were Gold Medals and one Grand Gold medal were won by Mexican wines in Brussels at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles. The tasting included over 7,300 wines from 40 different countries, so we can be very proud. This is the complete list:

Grand Gold Medal:

Parvada Reserva 2018 / Vinícola Parvada / Coahuila

Gold Medals:

San Juanito Gran Reserva Syrah 2017 / San Juanito Vitivinícola / Querétaro

Abolengo de Don Juan Cabernet Sauvignon 2018 / San Juanito Vitivinícola / Querétaro

Cava Maciel Perigeo 2014 / Cava Maciel / Baja California

Casa Madero Gran Reserva Shiraz 2018 / Vinícola San Lorenzo / Coahuila

Casa Madero Gran Reserva 3V 2018 / Vinícola San Lorenzo / Coahuila

De Cote Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva 2018 / Bodegas de Cote / Querétaro

Casa Anza Reserva 2018 / Casa Anza / Guanajuato

Casa Anza Reserva II 2018 / Casa Anza / Guanajuato

Casa Anza Gran Reserva de la Familia 2018 / Casa Anza / Guanajuato

Hilo Negro Escalada Tinto 2018 / Compañía Agroindustrial Vinícola / Baja California
Hilo Negro Alta Costura Tinto 2017 / Compañía Agroindustrial Vinícola / Baja California

Don Leon Shiraz 2019 / Viñedos Don Leon / Coahuila
Macario 2018 / Vinos Santa Clara / Chihuahua

Parvada Syrah 2018 / Vinícola Parvada / Coahuila

Don Luis Viognier 2020 / Vinícola L.A. Cetto / Baja California

Cuna de Tierra Pago de Vega 2018 / Bodegas Vega-Manchon / Guanajuato

G&G By Gina Sommelier Sauvignon Blanc 2019 / Hoteles y Viñedos del Valle de Guadalupe / Baja California


Syrah Pozo de Luna 2016 / Vinícola Pozo de Luna / San Luis Potosí

DON'T WASTE THE LIQUID...

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both lakes Powell and Mead. The rapid decline is putting water deliveries at risk to users in the entire Basin, including Mexico. U.S. Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner. "We will continue to work closely with our counterparts in Mexico. We realize additional conservation is absolutely critical to protect our shared water supply." Mexican Commissioner Adriana Resendez stated, "I reiterate Mexico's commitment to continue working to identify projects that help conserve water and protect the reservoir levels in the basin." However, Resendez apparently is not looking at the massive housing developments on our coast. One of the wisest voices heard this last month came from Don Fawson, president of the Leeds Domestic Water Users Association in Utah, an Upper Basin state impacted by the dwindling water resources. He said, "There seems to be some level of insanity to me that you continue to allow unabated growth at the same time you're dealing with this unprecedented drought. Rather than trying to find all these sources of water, we ought to be controlling the growth." It is obvious there is no control on growth here. One might ask, where is the water coming from?

Need for Partnership Starts in Our Own Homes "In order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of the Colorado River System and a future of uncertainty and conflict, water use in the Basin must be reduced," said Tanya Trujillo. The seven states have been told to develop plans to drastically reduce water use by 2 million to 4 million acre-feet, but talks grew angry and bitters. To put this into a mind boggling understanding, for us in Baja, we will lose 33 trillion gallons of drinking water for the stage 2 water cuts in 2023. The Basin states couldn't agree on the reductions, each trying to protect their rights. The



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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said it would continue to work with affected states and Native American tribes to reach an agreement. These issues are unbelievably complex, when every life and livelihood depends on water. The United States Interior Department officials have warned they are prepared to impose cuts if necessary to protect reservoir levels, however there's no way to know how the federal government will choose to distribute the water given the dubious state of its politics. Touton said, "I want to continue to push on the need for partnership in the basin and the need for collaboration, not just for next year, but for

the future." For us at home we can remember when we turn on the faucet not to waste the Liquid Gold.

Editor's Note: Martina is a freelance writer and author of Dust in My Sandals, Tales from a Baja Traveler. See our ad. Did you missed past Water Watch articles? Go to ggnorth.com

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COOKING LIKE A MEXICAN...

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1 big, mature peach, chopped
1 plantain, chopped
1 pound tomatoes, ripe, chopped
½ onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 oz. raisins, whole
1 oz. almonds, peeled, toasted and chopped
¼ cup of pine seeds (find them as piñones)

Salt

For the sauce:

50 walnuts

¼ lt. crème fraiche (NOT SOUR CREAM. If you can't find it, use "media crema" or half cream)

¼ cup of goat cheese, "queso fresco" or panela cheese (I know these vary in taste greatly. All three are acceptable and depends on your personal preference)

For the batter:

3 eggs and 1 extra white

Vegetable oil to deep-fry
1 bundle of parsley to decorate

1 cup of pomegranate seeds to decorate

Preparation:

In a deep skillet, add two tablespoons of oil and cook the onion until soft. Then, add the beef and pork and brown.

Puree the tomatoes and the garlic and add them to the meat with the saffron and laurel, and simmer until bubbly. Turn the heat to the lowest setting.

Add the fruit, almonds, and raisins and let simmer until liquid is consumed.

Grill, skin, devein and clean the peppers.

Cut a slit in the peppers carefully and stuff them with the picadillo.

Sprinkle flour over the peppers.

Separate the eggs and beat the whites into stiff peaks, slowly incorporate the yolks and make sure you don't stop whisking!

Carefully, soak the chiles in the batter and fry them. Once the batter is golden brown, take out the chiles and rest them in a paper towel to remove excess oil.

For the walnut sauce, peel the walnuts and blend with the cream, cheese, sugar and cinnamon.

Pour the sauce over the chiles and decorate with pomegranate seeds and parsley, making a Mexican flag!

Tips:

-The stuffing can be made a day before but nogada must be fresh.

-To buy peppers: greener are sweeter, darker are spicier. Remember you're going to stuff them so make sure you buy them as regularly shaped as possible.

-To peel the chiles without breaking them, grill them evenly on an open fire, avoid burning them but make sure they blister up in every side.

- Fruits must be added in order, from toughest to softest.

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This way, you'll avoid some fruits mashing in a puree and some others being too tough.

-To make the batter, use a wooden spoon to avoid breaking the bubbles and losing volume.

- In the olden days, families used to gather around the table to peel the walnuts. it was a family affair. Whoever did not want to do this could go to a convent and buy peeled walnuts from the nuns, who instead of talking over the walnuts would pray the rosary. People said that the chiles en nogada made with "nun walnuts" tasted better because the walnuts were "prayed".

-Some people say that the true chiles en nogada are covered in egg batter. Some say it's not necessary. It's your preference.

-The consistency of the sauce is tricky. It must be nice and even, not too thin and not too thick, kind of like paint, to coat the chile and quite chunky, because of the walnuts.

-Chiles en nogada can be pricey when purchased at restaurants, because it's quite a hassle to make them. Most restaurants though, serve them unbattered as they are easier to work in busy kitchens. 🐦