



Hello to You All,

A couple of days ago, I spoke with my 88-year old Aunt who lives in Ohio, and I was reminded...the weather is changing - winter will be coming and now, the trees are going to start to turn to reds and golds and oranges and purples. You who live in the cooler climes will be embraced by one of nature's pure joys - the changing of the leaves. Sort of the bonus you get, before Jack Frost arrives full blast and the snow shovels are again uncovered from the garages.

I didn't bother to tell Aunt Alice how beautiful it is in Mazatlan right now - hot, yes, and so humid, but everything is in bloom - magnificent - bananas ripening and coconut trees just bursting full of their fruit. Aunt Alice is lucky, her son lives very near her, so she need not worry about the winter coming - but just enjoy the gift of color and the crisp, bright days.

I feel this newsletter is urgently needed. I have been receiving so many emails from people hoping to work in Mexico. And while yes, there are jobs available for gringos, and it's really not in my nature to be negative, but, well, here goes - I've gotten this info from friends, from acquaintances, and from researching:

A tennis pro I just spoke with, at a quite posh resort in Mexico, is paid \$10/day, plus lunch (3 tostados). Of course, I'm sure he receives tips. He is building his home, and hopes to have it done in about 10 years.

By one estimate, even after doubling between 2002 and 2005, the average manufacturing wage was \$2.46 an hour in Mexico.

Social Security – one Mexican gentleman we met receives \$300/month – he works part time also, and is certainly not rich, but is fairly well off by Mexican standards. He is fortunate - he owns his own home, but says he will probably work all his life – “ don't want to stay at home with my wife 24 hours a day”.

I think you all by now know that eldest son did teach English in Europe a few years ago and enjoyed the experience ...even met his beautiful wife there!

I have received more than a few emails questioning the advisability of going to Mexico to teach English – and other subjects. I would never tell anyone simply not to do something, but I very seriously suggest you do a WHOLE LOT of research before jumping into that.

I've also received a couple of email from people who have sons or daughters who have taken the plunge and signed up with schools in Mexico thinking it would be a wonderful experience, only to return after a short stint, very disappointed.

I write that Mexico is a great place to retire – not to work. My opinion has not changed in 6 years. Of course, some people go south of the border to teach and have success – but make sure you check everything out very carefully before committing the time and energy it takes to go south of the border – into a third-world country – with the expectation of making money.

I've gathered some quotes from friends, acquaintances and some info from the Internet concerning this subject – use the info as you desire:

“From what I read and hear from teachers of English in other parts of the world, teaching English in Mexico ranks at the bottom of the scale of TEFL jobs – relatively few foreigners end-up enjoying their time in Mexico and most complain about the low pay and lack of hours to work.” *continued on page two*

“The Mexican minimum wage is about \$3.00 per day, and over half the nation lives on less than this amount.”

The average daily wage is approximately \$4.80 a day – it has increased and will probably continue to go up. (Barbie's note: I find a huge variance in the daily average wage being listed now – anyplace from \$3.00 to \$11.00 – I tend to believe it's toward the lower figure. I'm sure in the large cities, it's the higher, and in the small villa ges, of course, the lower.)

Continued from page 1

“At my first university teaching job, I earned almost 15,000 pesos a month (\$1,300) with benefits and perks like an office and a computer. At my next job, also at a university, I earned slightly more than 4,000 pesos a month (\$350) for teaching more hours to bigger classes. Benefits and perks were few, and I had to buy many of my own materials.”

“Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey are the cities where you’ll find employers paying the best wage to Americans teaching English.” (Barbie’s note: also more expensive to live in those places.)

So, do check very carefully if you or your children want to pursue this type of work .

“We’ve met many ... with the hope and dream of getting a teaching job and making a bundle. The word "shock" is putting it mildly when they find out what their salaries will be in some of these private schools. A good pay scale would be less than \$3.00 an hour. I know of some schools that pay even less than that amount.” (Barbie’s note: actually, \$3.00 an hour is pretty high some places, from the info I’ve gathered!)

CULTURE

Mexico is, unfortunately, a bit race-conscious. This apparently originated from the fact that the conquering Spanish (light-skins) basically enslaved the indigenous (dark-skinned) peoples. Ergo, for some Mexicans, the concept remains that white is rich and powerful and dark is lower-class. It’s amazing that such ideas still exist in this day and age.

Today, with about ten percent of the population being white, 60% mixed and 30% indigenous, race consciousness sadly persists.

Americans, visiting Mexico for the first time, may be surprised that about 90%, are darker skinned than the white skinned Mexicans they have become accustomed to seeing in advertisements and on TV.

This is probably one major reason that fair-haired people generally get a lot of attention in Mexico – especially females.

I stated in a previous newsletter that the easiest way to deal with unwanted attention is simply to ignore it.

Being not only light-skinned, but if your appearance proclaims that you are apparently not from Mexico, you may be called a gringo or a guera – there is usually no offence meant, it’s simply a description of what you are.

Gringo – There are many opinions of the derivation of this word – one is that the song “Green grow the lilacs, all sparkling with dew...” was popular during the Mexican/American War in the 1800’s. The Mexicans heard the song so often that “green grow” eventually became gringo for Americans ...it’s a possibility. Anyway, now Gringo is used for anyone with Caucasian features basically.

Asked if it’s possible to live in Mexico on \$1,000 a month

“It depends on the State/City/Pueblo you move to and the type of neighborhood/house you want. I am from the state of Guanajuato.. I live in a rancho.. I spend probably \$140-\$160 USD for electricity for two months. I spend \$2.00 on water. Food varies. I’d say \$50-\$70/month. I eat at home mostly.”

So, while it may not be everyone’s cup of tea, you certainly can live a lot better in Mexico on \$1,000 a month than you would be able to in the States or Canada!



Gringos gathering at Canucks Restaurant in Mazatlan.

RETIRE IN LUXURY IN MEXICO?

From a Mexican chat line: “Yes, you can live on \$1000 a month if you are careful and do not live in an expensive resort city. Your rent would be your biggest expense. Buses are reasonable. Cyber cafes are, too. Living in a temperate region you would not need air conditioning (Barbie’s note: in Mazatlan, it would not be pleasant without air conditioning – possible, but not for me) or much heat. Plate lunch specials at certain restaurants are well-priced. Mexicans live on much less and you could also if you are frugal.”

And another opinion: “All depends where you plan to go. If you live in the smaller non-touristy towns you could get by fairly cheaply. \$1000 would probably stretch nicely. I can almost guarantee if you stay in a resort or touristy area, you will be paying a lot for rent, food, cigs, beer. I think tequila is the only thing that has remained cheap in Mexico!”

So, please, get your finances in order, as I suggest in *Retire In Luxury*. Use the chart, set up a goal. Then, head south and enjoy life.

ON THE WEATHER IN MAZATLAN

ON HURRICANE LANE

From one report: Dozens of surfers paddled out Saturday to massive waves whipped up by the storm, (Barbie’s note: not the smartest thing to do) and residents splashed in knee-deep water.

"It was strong. It hit badly, but it could have been worse," said Carlos Borcio, a 25-year-old tourist visiting from Culiacan who was watching the waves and drinking beer with two friends.

Jesus Martinez rode his bike to work through flooded streets. "It's better this way," he said. "Normally, it's really hot, and now it's nice."

Lane was the second hurricane to strike the region in September.

Hurricane John earlier unleashed wind and rain on Cabo San Lucas, a remote enclave on the Baja California's southern tip.

ON HURRICANE JOHN

“Nothing happened here in Mazatlan from John. Last night at 9:30 we had thunder and lightning and tons of rain, but we get that often, without a hurricane.”

“It is Sunday morning, 8:30. The sky is blue with a few high clouds. No wind, no rain. On Friday night we had about 20 minutes of wind, and 30 minutes of lightning/thunder and heavy rain. (No big thing, we get that on average 10 or 15 times a year anyway) Bands of heavy rain Sat. with a lot of water in the streets. (Same thing) Now isolated puddles is all that is left.



Hurricane Lane viewed from Pueblo Bonita Emerald Bay

Because Mazatlan and Cabo prepared well, and it missed us, it was a non event. Had it hit either of us, it would have been an event. Had we and they NOT been prepared and it hit us or them, it could have been bad. The Mexican authorities did a good job.”

MORE ON THE HURRICANE

I have said before, it seems that usually the Baja protects Mazatlan area from most Pacific disturbances. I think the last bad hurricane hit Maz in 1983. Hurricane Lane's biggest effect was that it really squelched the Independence Day activities.

This year was a bit different, but, other than lots of rain, and some trees down, (we call it "nature's way of pruning") everything seems to be back to normal. Yes, roads flood in Mazatlan - if it rains in the mountains, you can have some roads flood too - so you have to be aware. Dick and I had to cancel some plans to visit a little town in the mountains, but that's just being cautious and prudent.

We heard one story that happened last year, during heavy rains: Some people were determined to visit the little village of Concordia. Well, there are two rivers you must pass to make the trip. It started raining in the mountains, and on their way back to Mazatlan, the water had come up, but they made the first bridge with no real trouble. However, by the time they reached the second crossing, the bridge was underwater. They decided to turn around, head back to the village and wait it out - wrong - by the time they got to the first bridge, it too was under water. So - being in Mexico, and being stranded with several other travelers and locals, some one started a nice big fire, everyone got out any food they had with they, someone had a guitar - well, they sort of partied until the water went down...no problema. Still, I'd rather not have that experience.



The gray heavy skies of Hurricane Lane in Mazatlan



And then the sea is calm, the sky is blue, and all's right with our world....

The very best to you and yours,
Barbie

2006 Barbara E Parks, RetireInLuxury.com. The material provided in this Web Site is offered for informational purposes only; it is not offered as and does not constitute legal, financial, tax, investment, or other professional advice or services. The author will not be liable for any direct, special, indirect, incidental, consequential, or punitive damages or any other damages whatsoever, whether in an action based upon a statute, contract, tort, or otherwise relating to the use of this information. All names in emails have been changed for privacy reasons, and some have been edited due to space limitations. Original emails are on file.



Retire In Luxury

and

Money Saving Mexico



Each full of important information you'll be glad you have before you go to Mexico.

All you need to do is go to:

<http://www.retireinluxury.com>

or

<http://www.moneysavingmexico.com>

... and scroll down and place your order.

In just minutes you will be downloading all my information that will help you through the maze of questions toward a happy and successful retirement.

Save the files on your computer in a special folder so you can access them at your leisure.

It's easy to print the books off too, and put them in your retirement file.

Enjoy! Wishing the best of the good life to you and yours!

Barbie and Dick

