



Beach Reads

News from Alma Libre Bookstore - Puerto Morelos, Mexico
Issue #2 - January 2003

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News From Puerto Morelos - Ferry Update

A glance at our last issue shows the big news was the beginning of the Yucatan Express Ferry from Tampa to Puerto Morelos. The big news this month is the suspension of that service to Puerto Morelos. The ferry will still run weekly to the Yucatan, but will be landing at Progreso, about a four hour drive from Puerto Morelos.

The official reason for the suspension according to a statement on the company's website (www.yucatanexpress.com) was the shallow channel entrance to the port here. Members of the crew, who were frequent visitors to the bookstore, told us that on some runs they had less than one metre of clearance below the ship. They were always very nervous about running aground. According to the company, the channel was supposed to be dredged over the summer to accommodate the ferry, but never was.

Not mentioned on the website, but also surely a factor, was the fact that they were running very light loads and the ferry will be more viable as a once-a-week service.

We only heard overwhelming positive reports from passengers and we believe that it is still an excellent way to explore the Yucatan. Bringing your own car and buying insurance in the US will save you a lot of money over renting and will give you the freedom to explore the entire peninsula. The Mayan Riviera is only a short drive away, and the city of Merida and its surrounding area are well worth an extended visit. Passengers said the voyage was much more pleasant than flying.

We hope to see the Yucatan Express back in Puerto Morelos soon!

News Briefs

Hola Asia has re-opened at last with an expanded menu and restaurant. A rooftop terrace is still in the offing.

A new restaurant has opened in the **Hotel Hacienda**, where Johnny Cairo's used to be. (The Chef from Johnny Cairo's has now opened **John Gray's Kitchen** on Ninos Heroes.)

An **ice-cream shop** has opened next to Alma Libre selling cones and novelties.

A new all natural restaurant, **La Nueva Luna** has opened on Av. Javier Rojo Gomez.

Spaghetino has re-opened and is now serving breakfast.

Happy Birthday to Chef Eduardo of **Caffé del Puerto**! Check out his new menu including Pizza by the slice.

10 Cool Things to Do in Puerto Morelos

Go Snorkelling at the Reef

Puerto Morelos' most spectacular attraction is its reef filled with hundreds of varieties of fish, sea life and corals. This underwater playground is located directly in front of the village. Because this is a Marine Reserve, snorkelling must be done with a guide. At the reef you can see rays, lobster, eels, nurse sharks, turtles and more. For scuba divers there are many different dive sites featuring: a military boat with large cut outs for divers to explore, a wooden wreck, a garden area with coral formations plus pathways and chimneys you can swim up.



Take a Long Walk Along the Beach

Miles of white sand beach and turquoise water stretch along the Caribbean coast of Puerto Morelos. Dotted with natural sea grass, exotic sea shells and scurrying Sandpipers, a stroll along the coast line is a great way to wash away stress.

Do a Little Shopping

Puerto Morelos is a great place to pick up a few souvenirs without the hassle of "Come On... Take a Look." Several shops carry hammocks, clothing, jewellery, art and more. There's even a fresh produce market at the town square every Wednesday

morning. Visit the Mayan Village where you can see local artists working in their shops as they create something special just for you.

Enjoy the fine Restaurants and Cafés

A Pleasant Surprise.... Puerto Morelos offers world class cuisine. Here you will find some of the best restaurants in the Yucatan. There are excellent coffee houses, restaurants and a bakery. You can indulge your taste buds in (of course) Mexican, Italian, Asian, Vegetarian, Nuevo and Seafood. And you can even find a bar to enjoy a drink or two!

Visit the Botanical Gardens

Explore the native plants and animals of the area at the 150 acres Jardin Botanico Gardens. Located 2km south of Puerto Morelos, the lush grounds take you through 3km of pathways with plants labelled in both English and Spanish for your information. Bring your mosquito repellent and watch out for the monkeys!

Go Fishing

Puerto Morelos offers world class fishing for Marlin, Sailfish, Dorado (Mahi mahi), Bonito and Barracuda. Tours can be arranged through the local dive shops or right on the pier. And every June the town hosts the "Torneo de Pesca Deportiva" Fishing Tournament.

Take a Picture of the Lighthouse

Ravaged by a hurricane, Puerto Morelos' old light house now leans heavily in the sand in front of the new light house. To take a really great photo, walk out to the end of the dock and look back.



Watch a Bird

With over 150 species of birds calling the Mangroves their home, it's a great place to see birds and wildlife you have never seen before.

Relax and Enjoy Life

Along the crowded Mayan Riviera, Puerto Morelos is a quiet departure, where life moves slowly and stress is a foreign concept. It's a great place to work on your Spanish, get a massage, take a yoga class or just hang out in a hammock.

Visit the Bookstore

What better way to relax, unwind and enjoy the sun and quiet lifestyle of Puerto Morelos than with a great book. Alma Libre Bookstore, located on the central square, has more than 20,000 new and used books to choose from including: Mayan culture, learn Spanish, travel and fish guides, and maps of the area. And we're always happy to give you any information you may need on the area.

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



Maya Nature : An Introduction to the Ecosystems, Plants and Animals of the Maya 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, it is also a reasonable price. We use ours to identify what is currently living in our backyard!

Maps!



Guia Roji is a Mexican company that makes good maps. Their popular annual road atlas is a must for anyone driving any distance in Mexico. 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!

Book Bags! We commissioned two local artists to design the official Alma Libre book bag. Dyed and painted individually by hand, no two are alike and will help haul your books home in style.



The Season

This was our first Christmas in Puerto Morelos and we didn't quite know what to expect. We knew what not to expect...cold & snow! The odd part was how the season sneaked up on us without the usual triggers (cold, snow, line-ups at the mall, endless TV commercials about the season)

The town did go into a festival frenzy as the big day approached and we even saw Santa once, rolling around the town in a red pickup truck tossing toys to the wide eyed youth of the town.

We celebrated by opening our presents under the palapa, and then off to the

beach. A most unusual Yule!

The town was busy, but never ever felt crowded. You might want to consider escaping next year to Puerto Morelos for a Season in the Sun!

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.

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!



Beach Reads is the official newsletter of Alma Libre Bookstore in Puerto Morelos Mexico. www.almalibrebooks.com This is Issue #2, Year #1. Retransmission & Redistribution of this newsletter without express written consent is just fine by us!