

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Mexico

[Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Mexico](#) is perfect for enjoying "Sun and Fun" with beautiful white sandy beaches, dolphin encounters, bicycling and ATV tours, snorkeling, kayaking, shopping, culture, and so much more.

With the cold weather rapidly approaching, Edward F. Nesta and I decided to get away for a quick holiday in December 2007 to sunny and warm Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, which is located in the state of Guerrero on the Pacific Coast, has a population of 105,000, is 360 miles (576 kilometers) from Mexico City, and 140 miles (225 kilometers) north of Acapulco.

We took an early morning [Aeromexico](#) flight from JFK airport in New York to Mexico City, changed planes and flew to **Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo** where long stretches of pristine beaches beckoned from the airplane window.



Our driver met us at the airport and whisked us away to the beautiful 416-room [Las Brisas-Ixtapa](#), which was newly renovated in July 2007. We had a spectacular view of the Mexican Pacific from the terrace of our large guestroom, and loved relaxing in the white hammock where we were lulled to sleep by the soothing sound of the waves caressing the beach.

We enjoyed breakfast in the **Bellavista Restaurant** overlooking the Mexican Pacific, gourmet dining at **El Mexicano Restaurante**, and listening to the live music each evening in the Lobby Bar.

While we were at the hotel we had the opportunity to attend a special celebratory evening under the stars with a performance of the four elements Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire, which combined dance and music.

Continuing the four elements theme, there was a gastronomic dinner featuring Earth: Beef and Shrimp Carpaccio with Arugula Salad and Old Mustard Vinaigrette; Air: Pate and Wild Rice stuffed Quail with Red Wine Warm Sauce; Water: Fish Fillet and Lobster in a Basket of Parmesan Cheese with Mushroom Stew in Pink Sauce; and Fire: Thousand Leaves Chocolate with Fig Ice Cream and Marsala Wine.

Please read more about **Las Brisas Ixtapa** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, **Restaurants**, and **Chefs' Recipes** sections.



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Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo is actually two separate cities, and we took a city tour of Ixtapa, (pronounced eeks-TAH-pa), and the nearby city of Zihuatanejo (pronounced see-wah-tah-NEH-ho) to experience the differences between the two. Ixtapa is the newer of the areas with development taking place in the 1970s. Zihuatanejo, which takes its name from a Náhuatl word, Zihuatlan, meaning "the land of women" evolved from an agricultural town in the 14th and 15th century, to a port town and fishing village, and is now a charming and touristic area.



There are nature parks where visitors have the opportunity to see crocodiles in a natural setting, and we watched with amusement as a turtle tried to climb on top of a crocodile to sun itself, however the crocodile wanted no part of the sunbathing business and simply moved away leaving the turtle to find a new "lounge chair."



Edward and I loved visiting the markets selling the famous blue and white Talavera and other brightly colored hand-painted pottery, peruse the shops for silver and hand-embroidered clothing, purchase Mexican vanilla, and in general, just enjoy the convivial atmosphere of meeting the people and of course, bargaining for prices.

We also enjoyed strolling along the Paseo del Pescador lined with small shops, and restaurants, and watching the fishermen bringing in their catches. One of our "finds" on the Paseo del Pescador was the ice cream shop where we sampled a variety of ice creams before deciding that our new favorite flavors were the pistachio and the three chocolates ice cream.

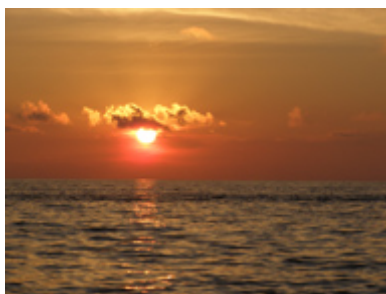


Our next stop after a morning spent exploring Zihuatanejo, was to the beachside restaurant, Teresita, where we watched the chef make homemade tortillas to accompany our fresh fish meal, and were entertained by strolling musicians.

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After lunch we watched the fisherman casting their nets, looked at the variety of wares being offered for sale by vendors, said hello to the resident parrot, and admired the small shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe.



In the evening we took a sunset cruise on the party boat, **Dancer**, to experience Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo from a water perspective, and watched the brilliant sunset disappear below the horizon, as the boat crowd danced the night away to the sounds of the DJ.



After the cruise we had a late night dinner at **El Mexicano Restaurante** at [Las Brisas-Ixtapa](#) where we dined on Trilogía de Camarones de la costa chica con tamarindo, coco y mango (Trio of Shrimp from the small coast with tamarind, coconut, and mango sauces); and Parrillada Mixta: Arrachera, Brocheta de camarón, New York, Quesadillas de flor de calabaza, queso, champiñón, ensalada se nopales, cebolitas asadas, queso fundido con chorizo, guacamole y frijoles (Mixed grill with many Mexican specialties); and sorbet served in a tuile biscuit. Read about El Mexicano Restaurante in the **Restaurants** section.



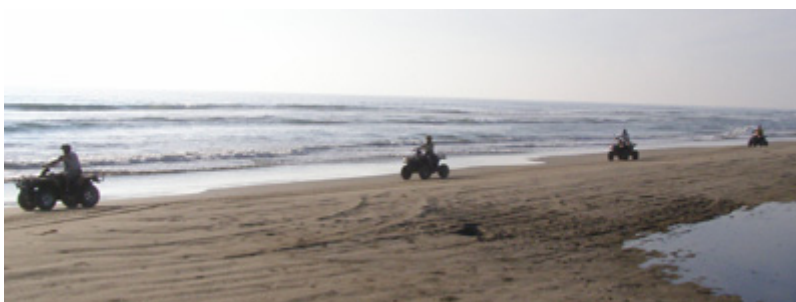
Edward and I have always wanted to experience swimming with dolphins, so when we learned about the [Delfiniti dolphin encounter](#) we immediately made our reservation. We swam, we hugged, we kissed, we rode, and we communed with these most intelligent and gentle creatures and loved every minute. Read more about **Delfiniti** in the **Adventures** section - **Swimming with Dolphins in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo**.



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To experience all aspects of Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, we rode ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) with Ignacio "Nacho" Leon, owner of [Aventuras en ATV's](#), which opened in October 2007. Traveling over dirt trails through coconut plantations, cattle farms, and also on the long stretch of beach was an incredible thrill racing the brand new automatic 260 cc ATVs as we flew down the trails and over the hard packed sand! Read more about **Aventuras en ATV's** in the **Adventures** section - **Riding ATVs in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo**.



Riding ATV's on The Beach



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Mexico is known for its culture and we went to see the sensational **Ballet Zihua-tlan de México's**

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presentation, **México Majestuoso**. The folkloric dinner show features typical Guerrero cuisine and tells the history of Mexico through costumes, music, and dance. The show depicted traditions from the Mexican states, and especially thrilling was the performance of the Papantla Flying Men, who flew upside suspended from ropes on a pole while spinning their way down to the ground. The show is located at the [Melía Azul Ixtapa](#) and takes place every Tuesday and Friday evening.

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We even explored Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo on a bicycling, kayaking, and snorkeling ecological tour with [Adventours](#) led by owner/biologist Pablo Mendizábal Reyes where we learned about the rich biodiversity of Mexico, which is the fourth largest in the world. Birdwatchers rejoice; there are 320 different species to watch!

After a morning of bicycling, we boarded a water taxi at Playa Linda for Ixtapa Island for more adventures of kayaking and snorkeling followed by a fresh seafood lunch. We returned by water taxi to Playa Linda where we had left our bicycles, and after a stop to watch the crocodiles, got on our bikes for the last leg of our adventure. To learn more about **Adventours**, please read the article in the **Adventures** section - **Biking, Kayaking, Snorkeling in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo**.



Adventours
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Music is an important part of Mexican culture, and [Paco Renteria](#) is one of Mexico's master guitarists. We had the opportunity to attend his concert on the beach under an evening canopy of stars at the [Presidente Intercontinental](#) where we experienced first-hand why this illustrious guitarist cannot be categorized solely as a Flamenco guitarist. Paco combines genres of Flamenco with other influences to create a unique sound that is all his own, and playing with his talented band of Lidya Madrigal (Percussion), Roberto Quintero (Percussion), Luis Quintero (Guitar), Benjamin Santikanes (Trumpet), and Emmanuel Macias (Violin and Keyboard), it was a night to remember. Read more about **Paco Renteria** in the **Music Scene** section: **Interview with Paco** and also a review of **Gitanus and Océano**.

To complete the sensational evening, there was a gastronomic seafood dinner where the menu included: Trilogy of the Sea - Ceviche served in a Conch Shell, Mahi Mahi Strips in Tequila and Avocado Coulissee, Clams in Mexican Sauce and Grilled Eggplant, and Crawfish Marinated in Cassis Cream with Vegetable; Marinated Queen Clams Gazpacho in Grand Marnier and Orange Juice; Passion Fruit and Lichee Sorbet; Marvelous 7 Seas - Croustillian Sole in Tamarind Sauce, Corn Tamale with Clam Filling, Crawfish Sautéed in Italian Chimichurri Sauce, Salmon Mousse with Anis and Scallion, Shrimp Wrapped in Prosciutto Slices, Saffron Squid Rings, Sautéed Endive with Oyster Mushrooms in Crustacean Sauce; and Bittersweet Chocolate Rolls filled with White Chocolate Mousse and Miniature Caramelized Pears on a bed of Blackberry Syrup.

It was the perfect finale of our last night in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo touching all of our senses, with our toes in the sand, fireworks blazing in the sky, the exciting music of Paco Renteria and his band, and a gourmet dinner.

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The following morning after having breakfast in the Bellavista Restaurant we took a last glance at the Mexican Pacific, before our driver drove us to the airport to board an [Aeromexico](#) flight to Mexico City. During our layover in Mexico City, we relaxed in the comfortable Aeroméxico lounge until it was time to say

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"adios" and board the plane for the last leg of our trip to New York. Since we have "discovered" Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, which excites all of the senses with its pristine beaches, intensely colored flowers of hibiscus and bougainvillea, excellent cuisine, culture, and music, we know that we will definitely be returning to this charming area that offers visitors so much to experience.

Important Information for Mexico:

The currency for Mexico is the peso. As of December 2007, the exchange rate was 1 US Dollar (USD) to 10.97 (MXN), and 1 Euro (EUR) to 16.28 (MXN). There are 100 centavos to the peso, and is available in 10, 20, 50 centavo coins, and \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, and \$50 peso coins. Banknotes are available in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 pesos.

The electric current in Mexico is 127 volts, 60 Hz. Time in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) - 6 hours, and is -1 hour EST in the United States.

The official language of Mexico is Spanish. Although many people speak English, to help you learn a bit of Spanish, I have included some basic vocabulary.

English

Spanish

Basic Vocabulary

Hello/Goodbye

Hola/adiós

Good Morning

Buenos Días

Good Afternoon

Buenas Tardes

Good Night

Buenas Noches

Please, do you speak English?

Por favor, habla usted el inglés?

I do not speak Spanish.

Yo no hablo español.

I do not understand.

No entiendo.

Yes Sir, Yes Madam

Sí Señor/Señora

No Sir, No Madam

No Señor/Señora

Please

Por favor

Excuse me

Perdóneme

Thank you

Gracias

You are welcome

De nada

Very good

Muy bueno

Very little

Muy poco

My name is

Me llamo (masculine) Me llama (feminine)

What time is it?

Que hora es?

When?

Cuándo?

Now

Ahora

Today

Hoy

Tonight

Esta noche

Tomorrow

Mañana

Yesterday

Ayer

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Where is?

Dónde está?

Where is the ladies room?

Dónde está el baño das damas?

Where is the men's room?

Dónde está el baño de hombres?

How much?

Cuánto?

Expensive/Cheap

Caro/Barato

Too much

Mucho

Large/Small

Grande/Pequeño

Open/Closed

Abierto/Cerrado

Health and Emergencies

Help!

Socorro!

I am ill.

Yo estoy enfermo.

I need a doctor.

Nesecito un doctor.

Pharmacy

Farmacia

I need a dentist.

Nesecito una dentísta.

Chest pains

Dolor de pecho

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Fever

Fiebre

Headache

Dolor de cabeza

Vomit

Vómito

Meal Time

Breakfast

Desayuno

Lunch

Almuerzo

Dinner

Cena

I am a vegetarian.

Yo estoy un vgetariano.

Beverages

Beer

Cerveza

Coffee

Café

With cream

Con crema

With milk

Con leche

Jus

Jugo

Tea

Té

Water (Mineral Water)

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Agua Mineral

Wine

Vino

Cheers

¡Salud!

Food - Eggs, Meat, and Seafood

Beef steak

Bistec

Chicken

Pollo

Eggs

Huevos

Fish

Pescado

Ham

Jamón

Lobster

Langosta

Meat

Carne

Pork

Carne de puerco

Shrimp

Camarón

Food - Fruits, Vegetables, Other

Apple

Manzana

Avocado

Aquacate

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Beans

Frijoles

Bread

Pan

Butter

Mantequilla

Cheese

Queso

Corn

Maiz

Lettuce

Lechuga

Lime

Límon

Orange

Naranja

Pineapple

Piña

Potatoes/French Fries

Papas/Papas Fritas

Rice

Arroz

Salt/Pepper

Sal/Pimenta

Soup

Sopa

Sugar

Azúcar

Tomato

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Jitomates

Vegetables

Legumbres/Verduras

Desserts

Postres

Cake or Pie

Pastel

Candies

Dulces

Cookies

Galletas

Ice Cream

Helado

Please read other articles on **Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, **Restaurants**, **Chefs' Recipes**, **Music Scene**, and **Adventures** sections.

Read other articles on **Mexico** in [Destinations: Cancun](#), [Hotels and Resorts](#), [Restaurants](#), [Chefs' Recipes](#), [Spas](#), [Liquor Cabinet: Xtabentun](#), [Adventures: Scuba Diving in Cancun](#), and [Travel News: Luxury Avenue](#).

For information on **Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Mexico**, please visit the website:
www.Visit-Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo.org.

For information on **Aeroméxico**, please visit the website: www.AeroMexico.com, or call them at 1-800-237-6639 in the United States.

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