

# THE SEVEN GREAT FEARS OF BAJA!

## (And how you can overcome them)

As appeared in the Baja Sun.

Isn't it Time You Knew More About Your Neighbors? We invite you to learn in the safety of your own home and you will have something to show your doubting acquaintances, friends, and relatives.

### 1. THE WATER

Actually, no one drinks the water in Mexico, although many hotels and other establishments have installed water purification plants, which provide an extremely high quality of potable drinking water from the tap. In restaurants you will nearly always be served bottled water and should you have any concerns, ask about the origin of the water. In 1991, the **Baja Sun** commissioned a US laboratory to conduct a test of 14 bottled water companies, 13 were from Mexico. **Arrowhead** of the USA placed 7th overall in water quality and purity. Those results are available from the **BAJA SUN**.

### 2. THE LANGUAGE

Spanish is the official language of Mexico, however, many Mexican people speak excellent English and the majority speaks some English. Americans have been coming here to visit since 1776 when America began, roughly 4,000 years after Mexico had been keeping track of her own history. There are English to Spanish dictionaries available and the truth be known, there are Americans who have been living here on the peninsula for 30 or more years and still do not speak any Spanish. They seem to manage just fine.

### 3. PANCHO VILLA (bandits)

Truth is geographical in many cases and it is most certainly true that the winners, or the ones with the biggest printing presses get to print the history books. In Mexico, Pancho Villa is a hero, having played a prominent part in the Mexican revolution. In the U.S.A. Pancho Villa is a villain and a bandit, having been set up and stiffed by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson (D) on an arms deal (America's first Bay of Pigs incident?) whereupon Pancho attacked the Army outpost in the town of Columbus, New Mexico where his troops killed some of the American troops and residents who (quite naturally) did not want to give him their guns. He then proceeded to outfox General Black Jack Pershing, who's troops never caught, let alone saw Pancho's army during the same Mexican revolution.

It is not surprising that Pancho Villa may have harbored a bit of animosity towards the great country to the north (U.S.A), after all he was certainly aware of the results of the Mexican-American war of 1846 which somehow allowed the U.S.A. to take more than half (900,000 square miles) of Mexico as part of the United States Manifest Destiny Program. And the chances are pretty good that he'd heard about the loss of Texas 10 years earlier. For you history buffs the Alamo and Texas belonged to Mexico. The guys inside including a favorite, Davey Crockett, were invaders and trespassers from Tennessee or some other foreign place. Allegedly, none of them had an FM3, let alone a Tourist Visa....

According to investigations conducted by the **BAJA SUN** using F.B.I. statistics printed in the U.S. Statistical Analysis of 1990 and the available statistics in Baja California, Mexico, there does not appear to be any city in the 7,421 U.S.A. cities surveyed by F.B.I. which has a lower crime index than Ensenada, B.C., Mexico. Mexico city, the world's largest city has less than 1/2 the incidence of crime per capita than San Diego, Ca. enjoys and less than 1/3 the incidence of crime currently being committed in Los Angeles, Ca. Pancho Villa, by the way, died in 1920.

### 4. THE POLICE OR FEDERALES

Actually, there is very little problem with the police as our surveys of visitors indicated. The **BAJA SUN** has had more than 10,000 replies to the question about the police in all of Baja. 69% of our visitors have never had a run-in with the police, 19% had their problems handled in a professional, correct manner, and 10% conceded an infrequent misunderstanding. 2% think they have been picked on. Sounds like there is a pretty good chance that you have very little to worry about. No one reported having had a problem with Federales. By the way have you driven in Mississippi lately?

### 5. LA MORDIDA (bribes)

*"BRIBERY IS A FELONY FOR BOTH PARTIES IN THE COUNTRY OF MEXICO"*, briber and bribee. No one knows which came first, the rich, overbearing American who offered some unsuspecting, innocent Mexican cop \$20. to forget a legitimate violation, (The Mexican cop was making \$10.00 a week at the time), or the despicably corrupt Mexican cop who falsely accused the innocent, humble American of a crime which would undoubtedly cost 20 times the amount, which, if paid to the Mexican cop, could solve the matter on the spot.

The correct procedure is to accompany the officer to the police station, and pay the fine. If you feel that you are being treated unfairly request to see the Chief of Police or the Commandante. In any case get receipts for everything, and the names of all involved numbers of the police cars or motorcycle and if you still feel that you have been unjustly treated, call the local Secretary of Tourism, or contact the **BAJA SUN**. Normally, if it is a *"Bribe"* situation when you offer to go the police station the game is over. No self respecting Bribe Seeker is going to waste his or her time taking you to the police station. They would lose too much money between victims and will probably give you a warning and let you go. Nothing is going to happen to you! There is no Mordida unless you pay it!

### 6. THE TRAFFIC

Driving in Mexico can be a bit harrowing at times and you are most strongly advised to purchase Mexican Automobile Insurance before entering Mexico as your American liability insurance is not valid in Mexico and full coverage is the best bet. Under Mexican law, (the Napoleonic code) you are guilty until proven innocent. Hundreds of thousands of Americans visit Mexico each year with no problems. It is advisable to drive defensively and to watch for road signs that are in Spanish, as that is the official language here. **ALTO** means stop, which may or may not be heeded by the local drivers, although they do make every effort to stop if a collision appears imminent. Additionally, stop (ALTO) signs may be placed at what most **Visitors** would consider irregular heights, so be sure to look around. The stop sign could be painted on the street. Drive with caution.

**Tijuana** and **Mexicali** are BIG cities and should be respected as such. The rest of the towns in Baja are comparatively calm, traffic-wise and most of Baja is desert or agriculture area. Baja is all open range, watch out for livestock and please do not drive at night.

### 7. NAFTA

Mr. Perot seems to be incorrect on the great sucking sound as it would appear that **NAFTA** is creating more jobs for Americans as Mexico increases its usage of American products. Interestingly enough it seems that if Mexico had more jobs for its own people that there may not be as many wanting to go north to work at jobs that no one else wants or will do. Maybe the solution is to find ways to assist Mexico in improving the infrastructure at many levels including technology, competitiveness, sales techniques, and services. There must be some manner of making this a win-win situation where both countries benefit. What is it that keeps the leadership of these two countries from figuring it out? Ask yourself if you know of anyone who has lost a job because of **NAFTA**, let us know about it!