

March 2010

San Miquel de Allende, Mexico

We really, really like Costa Rica. It's a paradise. So many places to go, so many places to see. The only thing the country lacks is cultural activities for English-speaking visitors. We enjoyed visiting rain forests, beaches, volcanoes and such, but we really had to come up with our own activities. So, we read a lot of books.

For us, the primary attraction of San Miquel, hereafter referred to as SMA, is the unbelievable choice of things to do. We've decided that SMA's location – 6400 feet up in the mountains of central Mexico -- and its colonial history attracts a different type of North American tourist than do the beach areas, like Acapulco, Cozumel, Cancun and Puerto Vallarta. The beach environment is conducive to total relaxation. You sit on the beach, margarita in hand; go for a swim; work on your tan. It's a hedonistic atmosphere. Hey, there's nothing wrong with that! We're headed over to Puerto Vallarta this weekend for these same reasons. It just seems as though the bracing mountain air makes you want to do something.

There's so much to do here that the choices are often difficult. The Biblioteca Publica, Public Library, founded by Americans, is a cultural center. Every day there's some sort of lecture or film or concert or all of these, mostly in English. So far we attended an amusing lecture on what not to say or do in Mexico, i.e., how to avoid language and cultural faux-pas. And another on the spectacular Monarch migration to an area about 5 hours from here, by a local Audubon speaker. We attended a concert of classical guitar and harp music, Anzie saw the movie, "Frida" last night. I participate in a Spanish language conversation group with both Mexicans and Americans. We're learning from each other. This morning Chuck attended a speak-out entitled "Change – One Year After". We discussed how we felt Obama had performed during the first year of his administration. It was especially poignant because the Massachusetts Senatorial election occurred just the night before. We attended a piano concert by an internationally known US pianist at the nearby English Episcopal Church. This evening we're attending the play, "Lion In Winter", at the same church.

There's a Writers Conference in February. Barbara Kingsolver is the keynote speaker. Many here are reading her new book, *The Lacuna*, fiction that travels through the major historic events of the 20th century in Mexico and the US. Anzie just finished it and between that and "Frida" is becoming an expert on the 30's and 40's here. Chuck signed up for a two-day workshop on travel writing. See www.sanmiquelwritersconference.org

One more fun thing this week was the Blessing of the Animals at 3 of the major churches in town. There were probably 10 tourists with cameras to every pet!

Those blessed included: little dogs and big dogs, birds in cages and even a rooster, turtles of all sizes carried in boxes by adorable little boys and even a lamb! Photos <http://picasaweb.google.com/chuckanzie/BlessingOfTheAnimals#>

Hasta luego!

Chuck & Anzie

P.S. – Correction to our last posting, Snow in Mexico. The last time it snowed around here was not 15 years ago. It was 25 years ago!