

Glossary
CINCO DE MAYO, THE NOVEL

A

abedul ... birch (tree)

abrazo ... embrace, hug

abuelita ... grandmother (abuelito = grandfather)

“Adelante” ... (command) “Come in, step forward,” etc.)

Adieú ... (French) Goodbye

adobe ... bricks or building material made of sun-dried heavy clay and straw

agua de Jamaica ... a non-alcoholic drink made of water and hibiscus flowers

aguardiente ... cactus brandy made from baked maguey bulbs

alameda ... tree-lined avenue or public park

A la una ... on “one,” A las dos ... on “two,” A las tres ... on “three!”

Allé

... (French) There! Behold!

almacenes ... warehouses

almuerzo ... lunch

¡Alto! ... Halt!

amigos ... friends

armas ... weapons, arms

arriero ... driver of horses or mules

arroyo ... ravine; streambed

arroz con pollo ... rice with chicken (chicken with rice)

asentaderas ... cheeks of the buttocks

atole ... thick, hot flavored drink made of corn meal. (Consistency similar to hot chocolate)

attaché ... diplomat assigned to a foreign embassy

avenida ... avenue

¡Ay! ... Oh!

¡Ay, estos Franchutis! ... “Oh, those Frenchies!”

B

baluarte ... bulwark, fortress

bandidos ... bandits, robbers

Berlina ... a horse-drawn carriage or “town coach” known as a “Brougham” in England and the United States.

Boca del Río ... Mouth of the River (town next to Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico)

bolero ... a Spanish dance characterized by sharp turns, stamping of the feet and sudden pauses in a position with one arm arched over the head.

bolillo ... a white bread roll; also used as a derogatory term referring to white people

bonjour ... (French) “Good day.”

bon vivant ... high-living “party guy”

buena gente ... good people, nice people

Buenos días ... Good morning (literally: “good days.”)

Buenas noches ... Good evening

Buenas tardes ... Good afternoon

bueno ... good

C

cabrito al pastor ... broiled goat

cachoza ... a dance style emphasizing erotic moves such as swerving of the hips and buttocks or the protruding and stroking of the breasts.

café con leche ... coffee with milk

caldo ... broth

calle ... street

Callejón del Ángel ... Alley of the Angel Callejón del Espanto = Alley of the Ghost

Camarón ... A town in the state of Veracruz. (Without capital “c,” the word means “shrimp.”)

campanas ... bells

campesinos ... rural people; farmers; from the “campo,” or countryside

¡Caramba! ... Good heavens!

carbonero ... charcoal vendor

Cañada de Ixtapa ... Ixtapa Canyon

cantina ... saloon, bar

Casa Consistorial ... (In Orizaba) City Hall

Cerro de las Margaritas ... Hill of the Daisies (“Daisy Hill”) in Puebla

Cerro del Borrego ... Hill of the Sheep (“Sheep’s Hill”) in Orizaba

Cerro Gordo ... Big Hill

ceviche ... a seafood dish consisting of cubed fish, with lime, chiles, onion and cilantro

chaparral ... thicket of low-lying kermes oak shrubbery

Chapultepec ... Hill of the Grasshoppers, where Emperor Maximilian’s castle is located

charro ... Mexican “cowboy” style for such things as food, songs, clothing, etc.

chicharrón ... dried pork rinds, a snack food

Chilangos ... natives and/or residents of Mexico City

chiles en nogada ... Poblano chiles stuffed with herbs and spices, with walnut sauce

Cinco de Mayo ... Five of May, or May fifth

coup d’état ... violent overthrow of an existing government

cojones ... “balls,” testicles

comida ... in Mexico, the main meal of the day - served in early to mid afternoon.

comida corrida ... a meal “on the run,” or a restaurant’s “special of the day.”

¿Como está usted? ... How are you? (to someone other than a friend or relative)

¿Cómo estás? ... How are you? (to a close friend or relative) “... hombre?” = “man?”

como valiente ... in the style of a valiant, macho or very brave or fearless person

contre-guérillas ... (French) counter-guerilla special forces troops. One of them would be called a “contre.”

copas ... drinks

Coronel ... Colonel

criolla ... historically, a descendant of European colonizers who was born in the New World but without the full legal, political or social status of a person born in Spain or some European country. (Criolla = female, Criollo = male)

cuesta ... crest, or peak of a hill

curandera ... practitioner of folk medicine; in some cultures, a “witch doctor” or “quack.”

D

¿De acuerdo? ... Do you agree? (“Are you in accord?”)

de nada ... of nothing. (“Oh, it was nothing,” or “no big deal.”)

Día de los Muertos ... Day of the Dead, the day after Halloween

diligencia ... horse-drawn passenger carriage

¡Dios mío! ... Oh, my God!

Dos Equis ... Two X's

E

El Gallo de Oro ... The Golden Rooster

encarnación ... incarnation

entendido ... understood

entrez ... (French) the command to enter

“Eres la preciosita de mis ojos” ... “You’re a precious sight to my eyes.”

Esos pelos ... Those hairs. (Derogatory, as in “all that messy, loose hair.”)

“Estan galopando” ... “They are galloping”

exquisito ...exquisite

F

faux pas ... (French) blunder, mistake (pronounced “foh-PAH”)

felicitaciones ... congratulations

fiesta ... party, celebration, festival

Fortín de las Flores ... Small city in the state of Veracruz, five miles east of Orizaba

Franchutis ... “Frenchies.”

francs ... a denomination of French money, formerly available in gold coins

G

Gracias ... Thanks, thank you

gringos ... white north Americans (in the 19th and early 20th century, a derogatory term)
When referring only to females, the term is “gringas.”

guacamaya ... a macaw, popularized in the U.S. as the “Froot Loops” bird.

guacamole ... chopped avocado, with lime juice and salt. There are many varied recipes.

guavas ... (English) guavas, (Spanish) guayabas, a sweet, yellow tropical fruit

Guayabera ... Traditionally, a white shirt with side pockets, worn outside the trousers.
Modern versions come in various colors, many with embroidered designs.

H

habañera ... Tropical dance, originally from Havana

hacendado ... wealthy land-owner; one who owns an hacienda

hacienda ... country estate

“Hasta la hora.” ... “Until the hour.” (“Until then.”)

Hermanos Vargas ... Vargas Brothers

hija ... daughter

¡hijole! ... wow!

¡Hola ! ... Hi!

huaraches ... woven leather sandals, historically home-made. Now, many are made with tire treads as the soles. More “upscale” models these days are marketed to tourists.

I

Imperialista ... Army of Mexican soldiers who supported the invading French army in the 1860's.

indigenas ... native (“indigenous”) people; Indians

Isla de los Sacrificios ... Island of the Sacrifices

J

jarrito ... small clay drinking cup

Jalapeños ... residents of Xalapa (sometimes spelled Jalapa.)

Jarocho ... native, or native style, of the state of Veracruz

Juaristas ... those who backed the government of 1860's Mexican president Benito Juárez.

K

L

lacayo ... footman (on a stagecoach)

La Pulga ... The Flea (wooded area along the railroad in the state of Veracruz)

La Soledad ... Small town in the state of Veracruz. (“The Solitude”)

Las Campanas ... The Bells (Posada las Campanas = Inn of the Bells)

Limoncito ... tiny village in the Mexican state of Veracruz

¡Listos! ¡Apunten! ¡Fuego! ... Ready, Aim, Fire!

M

machete ... (spelled the same in English and Spanish) A large, heavy knife for cutting sugar cane and underbrush, and for use as a weapon.

macho ... male or male-oriented

maguay ... a tall, spiny form of agave cactus with fleshy loose wide branches, cultivated for its fiber or for decorative purposes.

Mucho gusto ... much pleasure (“It’s a pleasure.”)

Mamá ... Mom (capital “M” when addressing her,)

mamá ... (not capitalized when referring to her)

mariachis ... mariachi bands have guitars, violins, trumpets, and vocalists. They are known today for their “charro” outfits of short jackets, tight trousers and wide sombreros.

marimbas ... (in the 1860’s) a wooden xylophone. Modern versions are made with metal and electronic components.

mercado ... market

Merci ... (French) Thanks, thank you

Merde! ... (French) Shit!

merienda ... light evening meal

meson ... old, country-style inn

mestiza ... mixed blood (native with European) woman. (Male = mestizo)

mescal ... an alcoholic drink distilled from blue agave cactus, similar to tequila

mi ... my

mi marido ... my husband mi querida = my dear

mochos ... derogatory term, historically used to refer to Catholic extremists

mole ... thick, rich cooked chile sauce, made with nuts, raisins and chocolate

Mon Dieu ... (French) My God!

Mon General ... (French) "My General." Historically, the proper way to address a general in France when requesting permission to speak.

Monsieur ... (French) Mister

morenas ... dark-skinned peasant girls from historically low-income servant class

Moctezuma's Revenge ... diarrhea

muchas gracias ... many thanks ("thanks a lot")

"Mueran los Franceses" ... "Kill the Frenchmen." "... los gringos" = the gringos

N

Nacho ... nickname for "Ignacio" (Without the capital "n," it means the popular chips, which are called "nachos" in both Spanish and English.)

nopales ... cacti (cactus) shaped like "Mickey Mouse ears"

norte ... north. Along the Gulf of Mexico, a hurricane approaching from the north.

novia ... girlfriend, fiancée, bride (depending on the stage of the relationship)

novios ... the lovers. (At a wedding, the bride and groom.)

No hay gente ... There are no people. ("No one is here.")

"No hay ni una palabra" ... "There is not a single word."

O

¡Olé! ... "Hooray!"

ornos ... ovens

P

Padre ... Father (used more often for priests; “Papá” is more common when referring to someone’s dad.)

Palacio Municipal ... City Hall

Palacio Nacional ... National Palace, the main government administration building in Mexico City.

palapa ... thatched roof shelter, usually on a beach, typically with no walls.

Palo Gacho ... Drooping (or Hanging) Stick

panadería ... bakery

pan dulce ... pastry (sweet bread)

Papá ... Dad, father. (Capital “P” when addressing him, small “p” when *referring* to him.)

Parroquia ... Parish. In many towns, the large cathedral overlooking the main square.

Paso del Macho ... Pass of the Macho (or larger) Peak

Pescado Blanco a la Veracruzana ... White fish, Veracruz style

pescadores ... fishermen

Péte le feu ... (French) “He farts fire,” referring to someone who is arrogant and self-important.

pico de gallo ... chopped tomatoes with onion, chile cilantro and seasonings

Pico de Orizaba ... Mexico’s snow-capped highest mountain, northwest of Orizaba

piñata ... A suspended pot or container full of sweets, which blindfolded children try to break open during a party.

plaza ... square (large public gathering place; also refers to the geometric figure)

Playa de Hornos ... Beach of the Ovens (“Ovens Beach”)

por supuesto ... for sure, of course (as one would suppose.)

por todos modos ... by all means

Portales ... “The Arches,” ... A popular tourist gathering place in the Port of Veracruz. An open, arched hallway looking out onto the main plaza across from the cathedral.

posada ... inn or guest house. (During Christmas season, a religious procession in search of an inn, ending with a Christmas party.)

posse ... a group of people organized to make a search or to help in capturing criminals

Presidente ... President

punte ... bridge

Pues sí ... Well, yes

pulque ... a milky alcoholic brew made from the maguey cactus plant

Q

¿Qué pasa? ... What's happening? What's going on?

¿Qué tal? ... "What's up?" "How's it going?"

¿Quien va? ... "Who goes there?"

quinceañera ... Fifteen-year-old girl

R

Relámpago ... Lightning

Rancho Remojadas ... Soggy Ranch

Rebozo ... a long woolen (or sometimes linen) shawl which covers the head and shoulders.

Respondez S'il Vous Plait ... (French) RSVP. Respond if you please.

Río Blanco ... White River

S

Sacrebleu ... (French) Holy shit.

¡Salud! ... To your health (as a "toast" when drinking, and when someone sneezes)

sarape ... a blanket with an opening for the head, often worn as a cloak

sargento ... sergeant

seguro que sí ... for sure, for certain, positively "yes."

Señor ... mister Señores = “gentlemen”

Señora ... Mrs. (or “Ma’am” when addressing a married woman.)

Señorita ... Miss

Sí ... Yes

siesta ... nap. (Siesta or “nap time” was a national custom for many years in Mexico.)

¡Socorro! ... Help!

soldadera ... female assistant to soldiers

sombrero ... wide-brimmed hat popular with cowboys and mariachis in Mexico

sopa de frijoles ... bean soup

T

Teatro Nacional ... National Theatre

teniente ... lieutenant

“Te quiero más que ayer y menos que mañana.” ... I love you more than yesterday and less than tomorrow.”

“Te quiero mucho.” ... I love you a lot.

tertulia ... informal social gathering to chat or share common interests, such as a book club

Tía ... Aunt

torta ... sandwich on a bun

U

V

vómito ... vomiting disease; persistent throwing-up; yellow fever

Vamonos ... Let's go

vaquero ... cowboy

“¡Válgame Dios!” ... “God bless me,” or “Bless my soul.”

Ven conmigo ... (command) Come with me

“Venga lo que venga.” ... Come that which comes. (“Come what may, ... “)

“Vienen muchos caballos” ... “A lot of horses are coming”

Virreal ... Vice-Royal (adjective similar to “royal” or “presidential.”)

Viva ... Hurrah Viva la paz = Hooray for the peace.

W

X

Y

¿Y usted? ... “... and you?” (“... and what will *you* have?”)

¡Ya basta! ... “That’s enough!”

Z

Zacapoaxtla ... fierce warrior Indian tribe in mountainous area northeast of Puebla

Zócalo ... Main square or plaza in Mexico City, overlooked by the Cathedral and National Palace.