Food in Guatemala
On the Cover
"Fiambre"
by Joan Manuel Rodriguez Zea

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PHOTO CONTEST
DECEMBER, 2020
“Children (niños) in Guatemala”
On the Cover
“Fiambre”
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Staff of the Long Way Home Hero School visit student homes during COVID-19

by Elizabeth Rose

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Amalia’s Kitchen by Chef Amalia Moreno-Damgaard

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Welcome to the November edition of Revue. We hope everyone is doing well and staying safe.

On page 26 Elizabeth Rose introduces us to the non-profit Long Way Home Hero School whose staff has been visiting student homes during COVID-19. Remote learning for a lot of these children is difficult because of lack of electricity or an internet connection, so innovation is necessary.

On All Saints Day and Día de Muertos (Nov. 1-Nov. 2) tradition says that the souls of our ancestors have permission to come and visit loved ones, and kites are the communication channels between the world of the living and the world of the departed. But these celebrations, like so many others this year, have been relegated to the virtual world. The Comité permanente de Barriletes de Sumpango announced that the traditional festival will move to social media this year via live transmissions on its Facebook fan page. You can find the link and some spectacular photos from last year’s event on page 48.

Our Photo Contest theme for this month was Food in Guatemala. We hope that you enjoy the great photography throughout the issue as well as some wonderful culinary articles and excellent recipes by Chef/Author Amalia Moreno-Damgaard.

— John & Terry Kovick Biskovich

Using the interactive features

As you turn a page you’ll notice some of the text/images are briefly highlighted. All you have to do is click or tap on them to enter the world of interactivity, including virtual reality tours. Double-tap on a page to zoom in. Click on a page to view highlighted content.

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When the Guatemalan government of President Alejandro Giammattei instituted daily curfews, suspension of public transportation, closure of open marketplaces and schools, cancellation of all incoming flights and the prohibition of gatherings of more than 100 people to prevent the spread of COVID-19 those living in poverty were hit the hardest. Before the virus while over 59% of Guatemalans were estimated to be living in poverty, 80% of all indigenous were considered in poverty. Since the pandemic unemployment and hunger have increased.

Also, of concern during the pandemic has been the status of childhood education, especially in poorer indigenous areas. Even before the pandemic only 52% of children nationwide attended school after the sixth grade. With the closures of all schools on March 16, 2020 many children have been unable to return to some type of schooling. This has been a result of new demands to work with parents and also the inability of schools to continue teaching.

Many schools turned to remote learning, but some students live without electricity in their homes or access to the internet and computers. The faculty of the San Juan Comalapa K through 11th grade Hero School, operated by the non-profit Long Way Home, initially turned to WhatsApp for class communication.

**Staff of the Long Way Home Hero School visit student homes during COVID-19**

by Elizabeth Rose

![Hero School teachers in Xiquin](image)
“We started working with each student by sending them homework via WhatsApp, but we realized that 70% of students didn’t respond,” said Seño Mayra Azucena Cúmez Quiná, Hero School administrator. There were many reasons. She goes on to say, “One of [the reasons] was [the students] not having a smartphone, or not having enough money to be buying internet data. This realization forced us to come to a new consensus with the teachers, to find a new strategy.”

Only 30 students from the total of 123 students enrolled in the project-based school own home computers and only 35 have access to smart phones. Teachers learned the majority of students could not be engaged online. They had to improvise. They began visiting each student’s home to deliver a printed workbook with homework and printed resources every two weeks. The teachers now move around the neighborhoods, visiting each student.

“The teacher goes to the house, delivers the guide, then the student has two weeks to work on it, and then in the same way we go back in two weeks to collect it and hand out a new one,” said Seño Mayra. “Some families are so grateful that they invite the teachers into the home so that in this way the explanations can be best received by the student. However, we are always thinking of the necessary sanitary measures.”

This method is in contrast to the public sector where each family visits the school for the materials. Seño Mayra explains, “The difference in our modality is that we are going. As teachers we are responsible for going, turning in, collecting, and having a personalized interaction with them. Other private schools are working via social media, but our demographic has limited access, the majority of the families don’t have a computer or a smartphone to be able to access that information, and so that’s why we work with printed guides.”
These visits have allowed the student the opportunity to ask direct questions of the teacher. And for the teacher to know how each family is surviving the pandemic. This method has also allowed families in severe need to be noticed. At the beginning of the pandemic, a lexicon of distress appeared on the doorposts of homes: a white flag indicates hunger, a red flag calls for medicine, and black, blue or yellow flags mean a woman, child or elderly person is in danger of violence within the home. With many more families out of work banderitos blancos, or white flags, have been rampant.

“Some colleagues noted the needs of families, one characteristic that of our community and of some families of the school, was that they put up the white flag. So, in that moment some teachers used their own money to raise money to buy some basics and they went and visited the family. So, it wasn't done directly when we turned in the workbooks, but it was done when we saw the needs of the family by the part of some teachers at the Hero School,” said Seño Mayra.

In Comalapa, the pandemic has created severe economic consequences, as it has nationwide. Estimates are that 60% of families have lost employment or have experienced fewer job opportunities. It is estimated that 74% of Guatemalan families work in the informal sector and many jobs are related to tourism. Most live paycheck to paycheck and have no savings. When work ceases there is no cushion. Many field and domestic workers have been displaced as landowners returned to work their own fields and do their own household work.

Seño Mayra recalls a recent conversation, “I was speaking with one mother and she told me that she usually works as a domestic worker in a home, and she told me, ‘Seño, I’m no longer going to work, I occasionally will get a day of work just because the
woman [of the house she worked at] wants to support my family, but now I’m not there the seven days a week like I had been doing.”

Vendors in the marketplace who have had their businesses suspended have improvised new kiosks in front of their homes or have offered refas, or snacks, through delivery. Others have offered to shop for other families, visiting the marketplace and delivering to the homes.

According to Seño Mayra, “For families of [Hero School] I know that sometimes whole families will go out to sell refas to houses, knocking door to door. Of course, this is risking their physical integrity, they could contract the virus, but they have taken this option of acquiring income for their family, to be able to meet their basic needs.”

The teachers at the school also began making masks to provide support to the community. “We started to make the masks through an initiative that Werner Bal, director of the school, suggested with the approval of Long Way Home for the budget of the masks,” said Seño Mayra.

In April, the school calculated the number of available sewing machines within faculty members and began a massive mask-making operation. They were able to make 30 to 35 masks each day between eight sewing machines and a team of cutters.

Seño Mayra learned the necessary sewing skills to perfect the making of masks from her parents during this period. “Yes, as a matter of fact, when I started this experience of using the machine, I got exasperated but I had the direct support of my dad and my mom and they taught me. And I felt… really sheltered by them because they approached me with a lot of patience and taught me. And it was really beautiful to acquire this skill, the machine is there, in any moment one could use it, but why didn’t I ever have this push to use it? I had never used it. I wasn’t born knowing how to use it. When this project came up, I was obligated, and I remember when I started to sew I would get discouraged, because the thread would get tangled, or the needle would break, but through this I was able to learn how to change the needle, or when the thread would get tangled how to fill the bobbin And so it was really beautiful, all of this learning that I was able to acquire through the work of making the masks.”
The school has made 816 masks for the families of the Hero School and 1248 masks for the community of Xequin Sanaii, a poor community about 12 kilometers from Comalapa.

During this time Executive Director Matthew Paneitz has worked hard to improve the campus with new landscaping and other infrastructure improvements. “When the students return, they will be thrilled to see the reseeding of the soccer field, an actual waterfall which will be activated during the rainy season and many new flower varieties of shrubs. The closure of the school campus has allowed us to beautify everything for their return,” Paneitz said.

To hear and see Matt Paneitz speak about this opportunity for Long Way Home, click here.

Throughout this period, the staff and teachers of the Long Way Home Hero School have demonstrated resilience and adaptation by bringing learning to the students in their homes, making masks to improve health outcomes and create new beauty and functionality on the campus.

For more information about Long Way Home, please visit: www.lwhome.org.
3rd Place Judges Vote “Dobladas de Quezo y Loroco”
Puerto Barrios by Hugo Iguardia
Popular Vote Co-Winner “Fiambre blanco”
by Francisco Hernandèz
2nd Place Judges Vote “Preparando el Pepián”
Jocotenango by Hada Cruz
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Achiote is widely used in Guatemalan cooking for adding color—not flavor or aroma—to dishes such as sauces, stews, soups, desserts and more. It comes in small packages because a little goes a long way. The quantity used corresponds to the desired depth of color. A little achiote creates a yellow color, while more achiote creates deep orange. Tomato-based dishes develop a vibrant shade and rice acquires a nice yellow tinge, thus enhancing their look.

Achiote (also called achote or annatto), is the seed of the achiote or annatto tree. It grows nicely in Guatemala and is native to the tropical Americas. It is available whole, ground or in paste form. In large quantities, achiote can taste earthy or bitter. Its orange hue adds visual appeal to food. You must immerse whole achiote seeds in medium-hot oil to extract the color. Use ground achiote as a rub or dissolve it in water and add it to dishes, or dissolve achiote paste in liquid prior to using or it will clump.
Amalia Moreno-Damgaard is an award-winning bestselling chef author born and raised in Guatemala City currently living in the Twin Cities. She provides individuals and companies with a taste and understanding of Latin cultures through healthy gourmet cuisine education, consulting, bilingual speaking and writing and fun culinary experiences.

Her cookbook “Amalia’s Guatemalan Kitchen-Gourmet Cuisine With A Cultural Flair” has won 9 international awards.

AmaliaLLC.com
In Guatemala, the fresh seedpods are sold at the mercados abiertos (open markets), and natural achiote paste without any additives is widely available at grocery stores. Because achiote contains no preservatives, once the paste package is opened, it spoils quickly. Achiote freezes well, breaks and thaws quickly. This is a good way to save it for a longer time. Just remember to make it as flat as possible, enclose it well in plastic or seal it in a small bag, and label it for later use.

Achiote is an integral part of the Guatemalan cooking culture, as without it some signature dishes would appear lifeless. Many of the signature Mayan fare would be dull without the visual effect of achiote. Stews such as kaqik, subanik, saquic plus others, and many sauces, especially the one for tamales colorados, just wouldn’t be the same without it. Chorizos (sausage), carne adobada (marinated pork) and empanadas de leche (custard-filled pastries), would be unrecognizable to Guatemalans without the tint of achiote. As a key ingredient, it is likely that any good Guatemalan cook has it readily available in her (his) pantry.

In the United States, achiote is available in dried seeds, ground into a powder and as a seasoned paste. Steeping the seeds in medium-hot oil releases their color quickly. The powder and paste must be dissolved in liquid before adding them to foods. The paste can be used as a rub when combined with oil. The seeds and the powder are the best options for Guatemalan cooking, as the paste contains other flavors that may
interfere with a recipe. Achiote can burn easily and become bitter.

In contrast with saffron, achiote’s main role in cooking is adding color. Saffron adds aroma, flavor and color to foods such as paella and others. Because of this, achiote is not a good substitute for saffron or vice versa, especially when making paella, although at times in Guatemala it is used as a substitute because saffron is much more expensive and not as widely available as achiote. However, saffron is part of Guatemalan and Latin American cooking because of the Spanish influence, and achiote is widely used in Mexico, parts of Central America and the Latin Caribbean.

**ANCHIOTE OIL**

Makes ½ cup

To make achiote oil, heat 1/2 cup of canola or any other oil in a small skillet until small bubbles start to form. Turn the heat off and add 1 tablespoon of achiote seeds. Allow the seeds to color the oil for 5 to 10 minutes or longer, strain the oil, and discard the seeds. The oil should be deep orange, not brown. Keep leftover achiote oil in the refrigerator for up to a month.

**Uses:** rice, soups, stews, sauces, desserts, salad dressings, garnish.
Grilled Guajillo, Achiote and Tomatillo-Sauce-Marinated Pork Tenderloin

Adobo is a wet rub popular in Latin America. Adobo enhances the flavor of proteins. In Guatemala carne adobada usually means pork marinated in this sauce and then grilled. However, adobo can be used with chicken or any other protein, too. Adobo is easy to make and gives proteins great flavor, color and aroma. Adobos can be partly cooked or all raw.

Makes 1 1/2 cups

1/2 cup roughly chopped husked tomatillos
1 cup roughly chopped tomatoes
1 guaque (guajillo) chili, seeded, torn into small pieces
1 pasa (ancho) chili, seeded, torn into small pieces
1/4 cup water
1/3 cup chopped yellow onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/4 teaspoon crumbled oregano
1 bay leaf
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground achiote
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 pork tenderloins (1 pound each) or 2-1/2 pounds boneless country-style pork ribs.

Cook the tomatillos, tomatoes and chilies in the water until soft, about 5 minutes. Let cool.

Put the mixture with the remaining ingredients in a blender and purée to a fine consistency. The sauce should be thick and pasty so it will stick to the meat. Taste and adjust seasonings, if needed.

Marinate the pork in the sauce in a Ziploc bag overnight or up to 3 days. Grill to desired doneness. Slice the tenderloins on the diagonal and serve.

AMALIA’S NOTES

The purée should be deep orange and tangy, with light to medium acidity. Marinate overnight for best results. Use half of each of the chilies for a less spicy sauce, if desired.
La Antigua Galería de Arte is happy to welcome Maurizio Baccili into our stable of artists. This very talented artist was born in Viareggio, Italy in 1969.

“All my pictorial research tries to represent the energy of the subject I paint more than the subject itself. A dance of reality when observed at an infinitesimal level, where the certainties of the everyday world collapse and everything becomes iridescent and possible. If we look at a table, a chair, or a steel beam we have the impression of the static and concreteness of the material... but peering into the deepest recesses of reality we discover that there is a frantic movement of particles and an extraordinary interaction of ancestral, physical and metaphysics, which continuously shapes the external and internal world.

In the past, artists have given a new swing to painting, images were in the foreground for the first time... Subsequently, there are those who have gotten remarkably close to the painted subject, to the point of distorting their appearance...Finally, there are those who took us beyond the painting giving us the third dimension...

With my way of painting, I take you inside the painting, to discover its energy, its composition, or the eternal movement of vital energies.”

Maurizio Baccili.

We invite you to browse into our website and check the rest of his works online at:

www.laantiguagaleria.com
or bit.ly/Maurizio-Baccili
The Giant Kites of 2020

Mar. 13, 2020: The first reported case of COVID-19 in Guatemala. For the last nine months, Guatemala has been fighting against the spread of this highly contagious and often deadly virus. Along with other measures, public gatherings are curtailed, traditional celebrations included.

On All Saints Day and Día de Muertos (Nov. 1-Nov. 2) tradition says that the souls of our ancestors have permission to come and visit loved ones, and kites are the communication channels between the world of the living and the world of the departed. The larger and more colorful, the stronger the communications with the departed. This is why so much effort is put into every spectacular kite.
Though some kites may be flying there will be no crowds of onlookers to enjoy all the beautiful designs and the joy that this tradition brings to November.

However, the Comité permanente de Barriletes de Sumpango has announced that the traditional festival will move to Social Media this year via live transmissions on its Facebook fan page (Nov. 1).

FB.com/Comité permanente de Barriletes de Sumpango

What will the departed think about a facebook live transmission? Will they get their messages?

So if you want to enjoy this colorfull tradition this year, get your computer, phone or tablet, grab a fiambre dish and enjoy the giant kites festival from home.
Popular Vote Co-Winner “Mom’s Seasoning”

JMG Fotografía
1st Place Judges Vote “Tamale of amaranth and heart of palm served with tree tomato salsa”
Cobán, Alta Verapaz by Kerstin Sabene
A tolat is a hot, traditional drink of Mayan origin that is popular in Guatemala and neighboring countries, referred to as atole. Atol varies by region. It can be sweet or savory. It may be based on dried legumes, fresh corn, corn masa, roasted maíz, rice, other grains, grain starch, fruits and more. Atol can be flavored with cinnamon, chilies, roasted seeds, panela, sugar or salt.

Atols are cozy and nutritious drinks. They are pleasing in the morning and in the afternoon, and they give much comfort to the sick. Moms make them for breakfast, and grandmas make them for their grandkids for afternoon snacks. Atols are made at home as well as by street food vendors. They are often sold at church atriums, parks, plazas, festivals and religious celebrations.

When I was in lower school, my grandmother used to make manjar blanco and her maid delivered it to me and my brother during mid-morning recess. We loved her atols and we really liked the atols sold in Quezaltepeque’s plaza too, but she always wanted us to have hers because she didn’t want us to get sick from eating in public places.
When in La Antigua and Guatemala City I frequented parks and recreation areas with my family on weekends. These places, as well as fairs and festivals, are where you find delicious atol de elote (fresh corn atol topped with cinnamon and crema) and atol de arroz con leche (rice, cinnamon and milk atol), paired with guacamole, salsa or bean tostadas. I have those flavors so heavily recorded in my mind that my mouth waters just thinking about them.

Atols are super easy to make. All you need are basic ingredients, such as canela (Ceylon cinnamon sticks), water, sugar and salt, and choose the preferred flavor. They can be made with fresh or dried and toasted cracked corn, rice, masa (corn dough), ripe plantain, dried fava beans, corn starch and the list goes on. Basically, you throw all ingredients in one deep pot, bring to a boil, purée, strain (in some instances), simmer to thicken to desired consistency, taste and adjust seasonings.

Pre-Columbian atols and other drinks were made with native ingredients and were either unsweetened or sweetened with honey from flowers or other plant sources. Panela (raw sugar cane) and other ingredients common today came later with colonization and fused with the ancient recipes to create the wide variety now available. All atols are delicious and you too can experiment in the kitchen with your own flavors using fruits and other legumes. Below is the recipe for my favorite atol, which I hope you enjoy!

¡Buen provecho!
Traditionally, atol de elote is a hot drink and a weekend favorite in Guatemala City. Street vendors selling atol gather at church atriums, mercados abiertos (open markets), at special celebrations and even in the beds of pickup trucks with their large pots lined heavily with cloths to keep the drink hot. This version of the drink makes a delicious hot or cold dessert.

**Makes almost 2 cups**

- 1 cup frozen fresh corn
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2/3 cup skim or 1 percent milk
- 1/2 stick canela (Ceylon cinnamon)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch dissolved in 2 tablespoons cold water

**Adorno (Garnish)**

Use any of the following:
- Ground cinnamon
- Cooked corn kernels
- Berries
- Chantilly cream (not traditional, but delicious)

In a blender, purée the corn, water and milk to a fine consistency. Put a mesh sieve over a small saucepan and strain the corn mixture through the mesh into the saucepan. Add the cinnamon stick, sugar and salt and bring the mixture to a quick boil, stirring occasionally. Keep a close eye, as it can boil over easily. Simmer until aromatic, about 10 minutes.

Lower the heat and gradually add the cornstarch liquid, stirring constantly. Simmer uncovered until the mixture is thick and bubbly (2 to 3 minutes). Control the thickness of the dessert by adding more or less cornstarch. For a thinner, more drink-like atol, add half of the amount of cornstarch suggested in this recipe. Serve immediately in cups with the garnish of your choice, or chill and serve cold.

**Amalia’s Notes**

In Guatemala, cornstarch is not used when making atol de elote, the hot drink. The corn used for traditional atol de elote contains enough starch to thicken the drink. When you’re using frozen corn, you need to add a bit of cornstarch to help thicken it and to give it pudding-like texture.

To make Chantilly cream: In a small bowl, combine 1/2 cup whipping cream, 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract, and confectioner’s sugar to taste. Whisk until the cream thickens to medium or stiff peaks.
Guatemalan Handmade Chocolate

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Guatemalans love limes. They sprinkle lime juice on just about everything, from grilled corn on the cob to beer, from ceviche to tamales, from soups to salads, from seafood to snacks, from fruit desserts to drinks, and the list goes on.

Lime is limón in Guatemala. Limoncito (little lime) is what many Guatemalans call it. When Guatemalans add -ito or -ita at the end of any word or proper name, especially in group settings, like limoncito or cafecito, they are using a cozy way of naming people and things—including food.

While lemon, or limón amarillo in Guatemala, has been gaining popularity lately, it hasn’t been the norm in traditional Guatemalan cooking. It is more acidic and not as widely available. Lime juice is an affordable, easy and healthy way to add quick and great flavor with Limoncito.
flavor to any food. I can’t think of a better habit to have in the kitchen and at the table.

If you are looking to cut calories when dressing salads, rather than using creamy or oily vinaigrettes, think of lime juice, a combination of fresh and dried herbs, freshly ground black pepper and salt to add flavor. If you desire a level of healthy richness, add olive oil to the mixture. Build your sauce even more by adding condiments, such as Dijon mustard or fruit purees, like strawberry, blackberry or pineapple.

You can enhance the simplest salad, vegetable or dessert dish with a few sprinkles of lime juice, chili powder, ground roasted pumpkin seeds and salt. Guatemalan street carts offer bolsitas (little bags) filled with ready-to-eat cut up fruit dressed in this style. You can do this at home using your imagination and the seasonal fresh bounty. Explore the mercados (markets) and let your eyes guide your purchase.

Make side dishes featuring roasted or steamed vegetables and dress them with lime juice, green or red onions, and salt. Beets, squash, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage pair well with the acidity of lime and vinegar. Use solo or both and enhance flavors with thyme, oregano and bay leaves. Marinate these overnight and serve them at room temperature.

Serve them at picnics, barbecues or at any outdoor event.

For the hotter months, make limonadas (limeades) sweetened with panela (raw sugar cane) using a combination of tubers (roots) and seeds to add flavor, nutrition and eye appeal. Make a limeade and add hibiscus concentrate and more flavor with crushed fresh mint. For a party, make a sangria with lime and orange, your favorite red wine and fruits and kick it up a notch with a splash of cognac on each glass. Serve lime juice sweetened with agave nectar on the rocks and flavor with sparkling water and garnish with a maraschino cherry.

LIMONADA CON JENGIBRE, CHAN Y PANELA

FRESH LIMEADE WITH FRESH GINGER, POPPY SEEDS AND PANELA

Limonada (fresh limeade) is a very common refresco to accompany lunch or dinner. Refrescos or frescos are cold drinks made with fresh fruits or flavored powders.
Traditionally this drink is made with just limeade and poppy seeds. The poppy seeds, fresh ginger and panela elevate this drink to a gourmet level. During soaking, the seeds develop a gel-like film that you can feel on your tongue. Poppy seeds don’t add flavor or aroma, but they do add eye appeal and a bit of nutrition.

Makes 1 quart

4 tablespoons panela (raw sugarcane) or sugar
1 cup cold water
1 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
2 cups ginger ale
1 1/2 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
2 tablespoons poppy seeds
1/2 cup thinly sliced limes
Ice

In a clear pitcher, dissolve the panela or sugar in the water. Add the rest of the ingredients (except ice) and stir well. Taste and chill. Serve the limonada in tall glasses filled with ice.

Amalia’s Notes

Since fresh-fruit drinks settle, they should be stirred before serving. Drinks containing ice should be sweeter than room-temperature drinks to compensate for the dilution of melting ice.

Because panela is very hard it must be broken for measuring. To break it, put it in double Ziploc bags, wrap it twice in a kitchen towel, and pound it with the smooth side of a metal meat mallet until the panela is almost powdery. Then measure the desired amount.

Amalia Moreno-Damgaard is an award-winning bestselling chef author born and raised in Guatemala City currently living in the Twin Cities. She provides individuals and companies with a taste and understanding of Latin cultures through healthy gourmet cuisine education, consulting, bilingual speaking and writing and fun culinary experiences.

Her cookbook “Amalia’s Guatemalan Kitchen-Gourmet Cuisine With A Cultural Flair” has won 9 international awards.

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**Photos in this ad are from previous contests by:** César Lizandro Miranda, Edgar Canás, Kerstin Sabene, Leceta Chisholm Guibault, Maureen McKean, Rodrigo Sergio Saravia and José Miguel Hosttas V.
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by Oscar Giovanni Orantes
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