

Table of Content

Acknowledgements.....	1
Garlic.....	4
Arnica.....	6
Capomo.....	8
Chaya.....	11
Wormseed.....	14
White Sage.....	16
Passion Fruit.....	18
Papaya.....	20
Prickly Pear Cactus.....	24
Rue.....	26
Aloe Vera.....	28



Medicines of the Jungle

Look for more Books

Published by

DayKeeper Press

Advancing Traditional Knowledge

Acknowledgements

To the people that helped us put together all the information on medicinal plants, how to use them, and how to prepare them for healing.

In alphabetical order:

Alejandrina, Blanca Alvara
Bella, Celida Castellón R.
Bertha Cruz
Natividad Cruz Ramos
Pati Cruz, Deena
Sra. Estrada Cruz, Flavia
Raymundo Ramírez
Delgadillo
José García Díaz

Martina García
Rosalba García
Ramona Gutiérrez López
Silvia Guzmán
Erika García Estrada
Flavia Gordian
Gorgonia Gordian
Hermilo Gordian
Aaron Joya, Sara Lemus

Angelina Lorenzo
Margarita (Camerino's
daughter), Doña María
Marta, Bertha Orrutio
Luisa (from Chacala), Quichi
Elpidia Renoso Alvarez
Imelda Ríos, Alicia Rodríguez
A., April Rýser, Claudia Silva
Santiago, Margarita Solario

Thank you to all the plant artists and the students who learned how to use the computer.

In addition, thank you to all the school teachers who helped us with the children of the community so that they could participate in this project.

This publication was made in order to help us conserve their knowledge of medicinal plants.

We welcome anyone who wishes to participate with their ideas or their knowledge in upcoming editions.

Publication Group

Alicia Rodríguez A., Aaron Joya, José García, Christian Rýser, Dr. Rudolph Rýser, Dra. Leslie (Alejandra) Korn, Christine Marie Labriola, Fernando Guerrero Alba, Hannah Lael Martin, Dr. Juan Enrique Vélez Escalante González, Carrie Lynn Pauly, Siu Ching, Tsang

Introduction

Increasingly, the use of traditional remedies, *caseros*, has been replaced by store-bought pharmaceuticals – sometimes with positive effects but often with negative side effects or no effects at all - except to empty the wallet. Knowing the long history and efficacy of these remedies, members of the medical science community in Mexico have led a campaign to research the medicinal uses of plants and animals and to document and research the many ways in which plants help, heal, and cure. This book documents just a few of the commonly used plants and foods in Cabo Corrientes, along with notations of the scientific research that supports the uses that people of this region have known for generations.

For three years between 1998 and 2000, we responded to a community expressed need from the mothers and grandmothers to ensure that their knowledge of plants and foods would be taught and passed down to their children. We embarked on a community-wide project to support traditional knowledge of plant and food use in Yelapa and the surrounding villages of the Comunidad Indígena de Chacala. This project took many forms: arts groups in primary school, arts classes in batik and painting, arts, computer, and scanning classes for teens, sewing classes that focused on floral designs, interviews with the seniors of the community, and gathering and cooking together – we met during all seasons, wet and dry, and focused on activities the people had expressed a desire for and reflected their age-appropriate interest. Members of the community – residents, foreigners, teachers, and tourists, took turns teaching and being taught, and learning.

This small book expresses a small part of the knowledge and art that has flowered during the project. The book was conceived, written, and designed with primary input from the children and core members of the project team itself. We invite you to enjoy the arts and knowledge of the community.

The project was supported financially by residents and visitors to Yelapa and by a small grant made to the Center for Traditional Medicine at Casa Xipe Totec, a project of the Center for World Indigenous Studies, an international non-profit research and education organization. We thank everyone who has given of their time, resources, and spirit.

Free books will be distributed to members of the Comunidad Indígena de Chacala.

Dr. Leslie (Alejandra) Korn
Director, Center for Traditional Medicine
Casa Xipe Totec, Yelapa, Jalisco
Oct. 2001

For more information please visit our website www.cwis.org

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

© 2002 This knowledge is the property of the Comunidad Indígena de Chacala.
All rights reserved.

ISBN 1-893710-11.4

Printed in the United States of America.

DayKeeper Press
Center for World Indigenous Studies
Olympia, USA

Garlic

Did you know that garlic was used as an antibiotic to treat wounds in WWI? Before the discovery of penicillin, garlic was considered the best antibiotic and it remains an excellent choice today.



Doña Catalina: Tomás, come here.

Tomás: Yes, mother-in-law?

Doña Catalina: Now that my daughter is sick, you will have to do the cooking.

Tomás: But... what do I know about cooking?

Doña Catalina: Well, that's exactly why I am here.

Tomás: And, what is it that you want me to cook?

Doña Catalina: Garlic, lots of garlic. Garlic is good for curing bronchitis and getting rid of parasites, which is what your wife has.

Tomás: And how do you want me to cook it?

Doña Catalina: You must not cook it long so that it is almost raw. This way it remains more powerful.

Tomás: OK, so what do I put it in?

Doña Catalina: In anything. In soups, in beans, in rice and vegetables, in whatever you can make. But remember to add the garlic at the end so that it doesn't cook for very long.

Tomás: Easy. I think I can do that.

Doña Catalina: Garlic is a miracle, and not only for bronchitis and parasites; it also purifies the blood, and it's good for arthritis, and well... lots of things, like skin infections, for example. You do like the flavor, don't you?

Tomás: Yes, and Gloria does as well. I will make whatever I can to help her. Thank you mother-in-law.

You can reduce the strong odor of garlic by eating parsley or other vegetables rich in chlorophyll after eating garlic.

People often place a bulb of garlic over the front door of the house or in the kitchen to ward off evil spirits.



Use

To cure athlete's foot:

Put a clove of garlic between affected toes to cure fungal infections.

To get rid of dandruff:

Put six cloves of garlic in a glass of vinegar for one week to produce a good rinse to get rid of dandruff. Leave it on the scalp for one hour and then bathe normally.

After using your rinse – don't throw out the extra! You can use the rest in salads.

Mix 2 tablespoons of the vinegar mixture with one tablespoon of olive oil. Even more important than being delicious, this salad oil is good for cleaning the liver.

Garlic has been the focus of extensive medical research since it has many medicinal properties and many uses. Garlic is one of the best natural remedies, appropriate for both internal and external use. One of the secrets of garlic is its essential oil that has a variety of properties. The active ingredient is allicin. Garlic can be eaten raw or cooked. Add it to as many foods as possible and use its oil as medicine.

NOTE: People who have sensitive stomachs should only use garlic juice, never its pulp.

Garlic is an antiseptic (it helps to clean wounds), an antibiotic (it fights off infection), and it also helps to kill viruses; therefore garlic is good to avoid colds, flus, and bronchitis.

Garlic also reduces the blood's ability to coagulate (it dilutes blood) and it reduces levels of cholesterol. Garlic is also known to clean the blood, as well as being a natural prevention for strokes and hypoglycemia. It can kill fungus such as athlete's foot and other fungal infections like vaginal fungus (yeast infections.) In addition, garlic increases the body's capacity to use Vitamin B (important to treat cases of depression.) Garlic can be used to combat intestinal worms and to remove phlegm from the lungs, as well as to clean the liver. It is also good to eat garlic in large quantities to fight off blackheads and other skin infections.

Arnica

Raquelita: Grandma, why are you preparing arnica?

Grandma: It's good for internal and external bruises.

Raquelita: How's that, Grandma?

Grandma: Well, it all depends on how you prepare it.

Raquelita: And how do you prepare it?

Grandma: Look, the preparation depends on the kind of bruise. For external bruising, you crush the flower, put a little bit of salt in it and some drops of alcohol and then you put it directly on the bruise. For internal bruising, you must make a tea. Boil a cup of water and put a leaf or the flower, if you have one, and a little cinnamon in it. Drink it hot two times a day for one or two days... that's it.

Raquelita: And what does arnica do to the bruises?

Grandma: Arnica helps with the inflammation and the pain.

Raquelita: Oh, that's great!



Comunidad Indígena de Chacala



Scientific studies show that arnica is an anti-inflammatory because of its high level of flavanoids. It is also an antiseptic and helps relieve pain associated with bruising, cuts, aching muscles and joints, inflammation, sprains, and athlete's foot. According to experts on herbal medicine, arnica is for external healing use and to relieve pain associated with these injuries.

NOTE: *Arnica is mainly to be used externally. One should only drink very little in tea!*

Arnica is available as a homeopathic remedy. Purchase a bottle and keep it in your medicine chest!

Use

Preparation of a poultice:

Put a handful of dried or fresh arnica flowers and leaves in a cup of boiled water. When the water cools, apply the concoction directly to the affected area with a clean cloth,

Or

Cook 1 handful of arnica flowers in olive oil for about 1-1.5 hours and then apply the mixture with light massage. The oil may be applied warm or cold.

NOTE: *This should not be used in open wounds!*



Capomo



Leticia: Listen, María, what's wrong? Why is the baby always crying?

María: Oh, I don't know what to do anymore Leti for some reason I don't have much milk.

Leticia: Well, aren't you drinking your capomo?

María: Capomo? Why would I drink that?

Leticia: Don't tell me that you didn't know that capomo helps you to lactate. My mother and grandmother used it and so do I.

María: Really?

Leticia: Well, of course, and although it doesn't have caffeine, it will give you a lot of energy.

María: That's great! I'm going to make us some cups of capomo right away!



Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Scientific research has demonstrated that capomo is very nutritional and healthy. Capomo is full of proteins and high quantities of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, iron, riboflavin, niacin, phosphorus, calcium, and amino acid complexes. Every part of the tree – the leaves, the sap, the fruit and its seeds are useful and nutritional, especially the seeds. The leaves can be eaten in the same way one eats spinach. One can make marmalade or jam with the fruit. The seeds are more nutritional than corn, wheat, or rice; they have similar nutritional values to soy beans. The seeds can be made into flour that can be used to make tortillas or bread. Also, the seeds maintain their nutrients when they are cooked like potatoes or roasted like coffee beans.

Medical studies also show the sap of the tree to have many medical properties. It can be used to cure nausea and indigestion, and to increase lactation.



The seed and the leaves of the capomo tree are very good for cattle, pigs, and other animals as well. It is said that cows produce more milk when they are fed capomo leaves.



Medicines of the Jungle

Use

To purify the blood:

Place tree bark from the capomo tree in water for two days. Then, drink the water.

To spice up your capomo:

Try adding any variety of natural flavors to it such as: cinnamon, nutmeg, or vanilla. These flavors can be added when boiling the capomo grounds.

Café de capomo suggestions – 1 tablespoon of ground capomo to 1 cup of water and a pinch of flavor.

Recipe:

Capomo Bread

Ingredients:

1 kg. of capomo (well cooked - boiled)

2.5 liters water

200 grams butter

5 eggs

6 oz honey

Preparation:

Boil the capomo in a pot of water with ash until tender and the skin peels away.

Mush the capomo with your hands until it forms a soft dough; place it in a mixing bowl.

Mix in the yolks of five eggs, the butter, and the honey. Stir.

In a separate bowl, whip the whites of the eggs until firm.

Then fold the egg whites into the capomo mixture.

Grease the baking pan with butter and pour the mixture into pan.

Bake at 350° for about 45 minutes.

To check if the bread is done, insert a knife.

(When the knife comes out clean, the bread is done.)

Remove the bread from oven. When the bread is cooled, then tip it out onto a platter.



Chaya



Gaby: Doña Alicia, what are you doing?

Doña Alicia: I am making a chaya drink.

Gaby: May I try some?

Doña Alicia: Of course.

Gaby: Oh... this is delicious! How do you make it?

Doña Alicia: For one glass of water, crush up 4 gently boiled chaya leaves and then put in whatever other flavor you want – lime, orange, or pineapple. You can also drink it naturally or with a little honey.

Gaby: Doña Alicia, you seem to be very healthy.

Doña Alicia: Yes, and that's because I drink chaya everyday to purify my entire organism. It's good for arthritis and helps to keep me looking young. Sometimes people buy vitamins in the pharmacy, but in reality we have this miracle growing right in our own backyards.

Gaby: Are there other ways to eat it?

Doña Alicia: Of course, in foods, drinks, soups, gelatin, fillings – everything!

Gaby: And what else is it good for?

Doña Alicia: Well, it is rich in protein like spinach, it helps prevent the flu and it's a good source of energy. Would you like some more chaya, honey?

Gaby: Yes. Thank you Doña Alicia!



Medicines of the Jungle

"CHAYA"



*SUSANA A.
"Garcia R."*

Use

Recipe:

Stuffed Chaya Leaves

Ingredients:

1 onion	spicy chilies	optional: fried hamburger
olive oil	1/8 head of cabbage oregano	
20 chaya leaves	tomato sauce	1 zucchini
3 cloves garlic	1 pot of rice	cheese (cheddar or chihuahua)

Preparation:

Boil water to make rice – use whatever rice recipe you desire.

Finely cut up the onion, cabbage, zucchini, and garlic. Sautee the vegetables in some olive oil and add the chilies (chopped) and oregano to the mixture.

If desired, in a separate pan, fry up hamburger. Strain off excess fat.

Allow each mixture to cool so that it can be easily touched. When the mixtures are cool, mix the vegetables with the rice and the meat.

Boil the chaya leaves for about 1-2 minutes. Do not overcook them! The goal is to make the leaves bendable.

Spoon approximately 2-3 tablespoons onto the edge of a leaf.

Roll the leaf up like an enchilada or a burrito to enclose the mixture and place the rolled leaf in a baking dish. Repeat until all leaves and the filling is used up.

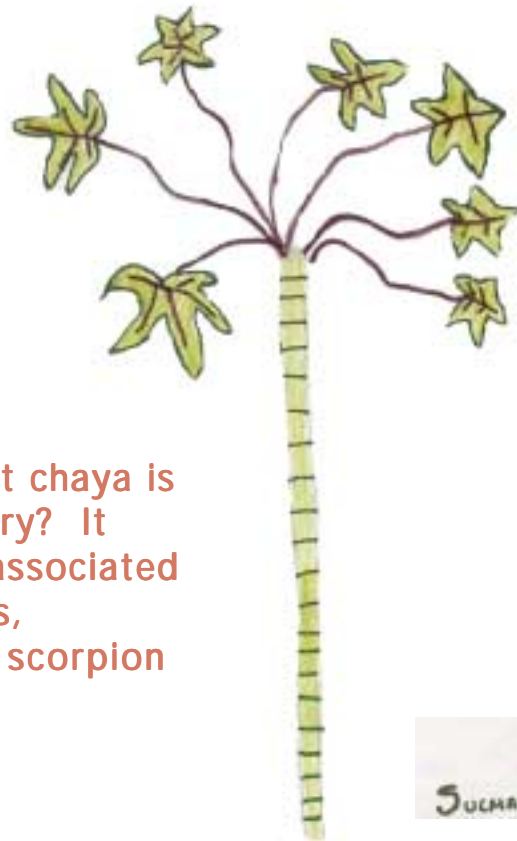
Cover the leaves with tomato sauce and sprinkle cheese to your liking.

Place in the oven for 15-20 minutes at a medium temperature until the cheese is melted.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Scientists have discovered that chaya has minerals like calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron, Vitamins A, B, and C, chlorophyll, and double the amount of protein found in spinach or alfalfa. Chaya has more protein than meat. Medical studies have shown that chaya is very efficient at helping people improve blood circulation, lose weight, lower their cholesterol level, stimulate the liver (to improve digestion), and alleviate constipation. Since it is a good source of Vitamin C, drink the tea everyday to improve eyesight and prevent cataracts. Chaya cures skin blemishes and dry skin (if applied directly to the skin), hardens teeth, disinfects the lungs, prevents anemia and arthritis, helps regulate menstrual cycles and problems associated with diabetes.

CHAYA



Did you know that chaya is an anti-inflammatory? It reduces swelling associated with varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and scorpion bites.

JUSTO R.
JULIA ARELY REYNOSO CERVALE



Wormseed*

(Also known as Mexican tea or Saint Mary's Herb)

Did you know that wormseed also repels wasps? To avoid problems of wasp nests near the house, rub crushed wormseed in door and window frames.

Blanca Álvarez: Good day Marta, how are you?

Marta González: Good, thank God. But, you know what? My poor children have stomach-aches.

Blanca Álvarez: Do you think they have parasites or what?

Marta González: Yes, I think so.

Blanca Álvarez: Well, have you given them wormseed?

Marta González: Not yet, but I was just about to ask you in fact... how do you prepare it?

Blanca Álvarez: Look, starting tomorrow, you'll have to make them a wormseed tea in the morning and give it to them to drink before they eat breakfast. Then don't let them eat until at least an hour after. You must continue to do this for 9 days.

Marta González: OK. I will begin tomorrow.

Blanca Álvarez: You can also put wormseed in with beans. It tastes great, helps with parasites, and gets rid of gas too.

Marta González: That's a good idea. Thanks a lot Blanca.

Blanca Álvarez: Take care Marta.

*"E pázotl" is the Aztec word for epazote. Wormseed in modern Spanish. It comes from two Aztec words "epatl" and "tzotl" meaning "skunk" and "sweat" respectively.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Scientific studies have proven wormseed to be effective at killing intestinal worms and other parasites. Wormseed contains limonene, p-cymene, and an essential oil called “ascaridol” which acts as poison to intestinal parasites, especially intestinal worms. By mixing wormseed with beans, it helps to eliminate gas associated with digestion.



Did you know that wormseed tea can also be used to induce menstruation?

NOTE: Pregnant women should use epazote very sparingly.

Use

To make tea:

Gently boil one small handful of fresh wormseed in approximately one liter of water.
You can drink the tea hot or cold throughout the day.
Try drinking it cold with lime!

Don't forget to add wormseed to beans to reduce gas pains.



White Sage



E stafiata has also been used to alleviate morning sickness, just like ginger.

Alfredo: Mom, I feel sick. I think I need to go to the doctor.

Sra. Guerrero: Well, let's see poor thing – what's wrong?

Alfredo: My stomach hurts, I have diarrhea, and I have already vomited twice today. I think I need some penicillin and a shot.

Sra. Guerrero: No, these things might not be good for you. I'm going to make you an white sage tea to drink right away, and then later I'm going to make you another one. Let's see if we can cure you this way first.

Alfredo: Do you think that will help me?

Sra. Guerrero: Oh, my child... I have been using white sage for many many years. It's always worked. And before me, my mother and my grandmother always used it too. Don't worry Alfredo. You will get better very quickly by drinking white sage.

Alfredo: Why?

Sra. Guerrero: Well, that's because it is used for parasites, diarrhea, intestinal problems, and many other things. Now, drink your cup of tea because it's ready and you'll start feeling better.

Alfredo: Thank you Mom.

* E stafiata (white sage in modern spanish) in Aztec.

** E stafiata in Mayan.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Medical studies confirm that white sage is a good remedy for diarrhea, vomiting, parasites, dysentery, digestive problems, and intestinal blockages. For babies, it is useful as a purgative to get rid of diarrhea and vomit. Placing a poultice directly on the abdomen helps alleviate colic. White sage can also be made into an expectorant for babies when it is ground up with water. Children can chew the leaves directly. For older people, one can bathe in a tub of white sage to combat rheumatism and take it in a tea for stomach and abdominal pain. It can also be made into a hot ointment that can be used to combat pleurisy (inflammation of the lungs.) Cooking it over a slow fire, it can be used as a remedy for cough, asthma, and diarrhea and mixed with corn paste, it can be placed over the heart to stop vertigo.

Use

To make tea:

Gently boil 1 handful of white sage in 2 cups of water. As honey is a natural antibiotic, it should be used to sweeten the tea instead of sugar.

When you have stomach or abdominal pains accompanied by diarrhea, you should drink two cups of white sage tea. To alleviate diarrhea pains naturally, feel for a sore point on your leg between the two bones - the tibia and the fibula. This point is about 4 inches up the leg, from the top of the outside anklebone in the soft tissue between the two bones. Feel for a very sensitive point in this region. When you find the point, apply pressure for approximately 15 minutes. If it is difficult for you to reach this point, have a friend apply pressure for you.

To make a poultice:

One must make the tea 4 times as strong. Wet a towel in the tea and place it directly on the skin. Cover the towel with a blanket to keep it warm for a longer period of time.

NOTE: Do not drink the tea this way – it is for external use only.

Passion Fruit

Sra. Sánchez:

Listen little sister, Alfredo comes home very stressed from work quite often.

Sra. Delgado: My husband was the same way.

Sra. Sánchez: But I mean *really* stressed and nervous. He can't even sit down, and he paces back and forth smoking, sometimes yelling at me, and sometimes he even gets violent with me. Because of his nerves, because of work-related stress, because we don't have money...

Sra. Delgado: Well, you have to help him calm down. I'm telling you, Roberto was the same way.

Sra. Sánchez: And what did he do - go to the doctor?



Sra. Delgado:

No, little sister, no. Doctors? With passion fruit tea alone, you can calm him down.

Sra. Sánchez: Really? How do I prepare it?

Sra. Delgado: Look, when your husband gets home from work, have the tea ready for him. Make it with some leaves or flowers of the passion fruit tree and a little bit of honey. Sometimes it takes a little while to work. You could also massage his neck and shoulders to help his nervous system relax.

Sra. Sánchez: OK. I will try it today right away. Thank you Berta.

Sra. Delgado: Good luck Tere.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala



Did you know that when the Spanish arrived in Mexico they named the plant "Passion fruit" because the flower reminded them of the passion of

Christ? The crown of the flower represents Christ's crown of thorns, the 5 sepals and 5 petals represent 10 of the 12 disciples (Peter and Judas are not represented), and other parts of the plant represent the marks from the nails and his other wounds.



Scientific research shows that the flower of the passion fruit is a sedative. It is good for tension, the nerves, and insomnia. An infusion made from the branches, leaves, and flowers acts as a sedative due to the presence of alkaloid harmaline. Passion fruit also helps to alleviate dysentery (diarrhea with stomach ache), neuralgia (aching nerves), painful menstrual cycles, heart palpitations, mental fatigue, menopause, and high blood pressure.

Medicines of the Jungle



Use

To make tea:

Gently simmer a handful of leaves and flowers in 4 cups of water for 15 minutes. Strain the mixture and drink hot.

Recipe:

Hot Fruit Sauce to Accompany French Toast or Pancakes

Ingredients:

2 apples	4-6 passion fruits (the pulp)	¼ cup water
2 bananas	1 tablespoon honey	
2 oranges	crushed pecans	

Preparation:

Cut the apples, bananas, and oranges into small pieces.

Put into saucepan with the water and gently simmer until they begin to liquify.

Do not boil the mixture!

After approximately 10 minutes, add the passion fruit in and cook for about another 5 minutes. Towards the end, add the tablespoon of honey.

Spoon over freshly cooked French toast or pancakes. Garnish with pecans.

This recipe is appropriate for diabetics when the honey is omitted.

Papaya

Did you know that indigenous peoples use the skin of a green papaya to tenderize meat? Mass-produced meat tenderizers of today found in stores contain papain that is imported from Mexico and Africa, thus representing another great contribution to the culinary world made by the indigenous peoples of Mexico.



Lupita: Hello Grandma, what are you doing?

Abuela: I'm cutting up a papaya.

Lupita: Why?

Abuela: To eat the fruit. Then, I will save the seeds to make a tea that kills intestinal worms and the skin we're going to use to dress your Grandfather's wound.

Lupita: So, you're not throwing anything away?

Abuela: Of course not. The papaya is very useful and very nutritional. It's very good for your digestion.

Lupita: I like to eat papaya with chili pepper, lime, and salt.

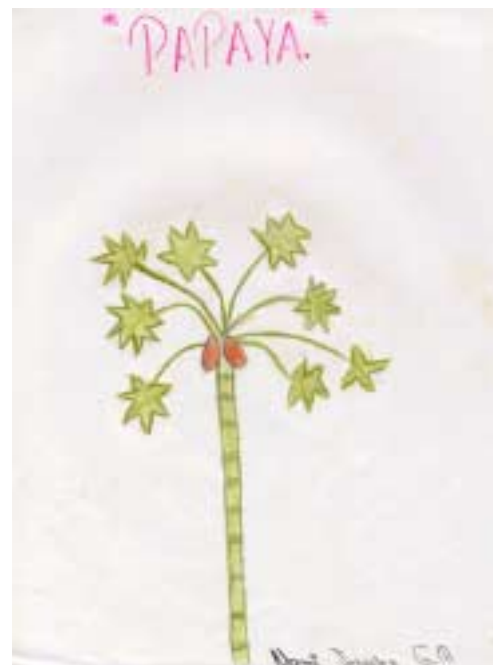
Abuela: Good. Sit down and I'll give you a little piece.

Lupita: Thank you Grandma!

Did you know that papaya is native to Mexico?

According to medical scientists, papaya is very medicinal. Papain, which is the white milky substance found just underneath the green skin, is an enzyme that helps digest proteins. Medical uses of the green papaya sap are: as a styptic (to stop the flow of blood), as a vermicide (to treat intestinal worms), as an application to combat sand fleas and a remedy for freckles, warts, corns, eczema (an acne problem), ringworms, infected wounds, malignant tumors, bleeding hemorrhoids, or pain associated with burns. Papain is obtained from the unripe (green) papaya fruit by making $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slices into the fruit while it is still hanging on the tree. Applied directly to a wound, papain can heal an infection. For cavities or any pus-filled infection, apply the inner skin of a green papaya. Papain can also alleviate constipation. Dried papaya seeds are antibacterial and can be used in tea to kill off parasites. Nutrition studies have found high levels of Vitamin A and C and potassium in the papaya.

Note: Some people are sensitive to papain so make note of any irritation to the skin.



Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Apply a drop of papain to bee stings and mosquito bites to reduce inflammation and pain.



Use

Recipe:

Sweet and Spicy Seafood Salsa

Ingredients:

3 ripe mangoes	1 ½ tablespoons ginger	1 ripe papaya
3 jalapeño peppers	1 tablespoon vinegar	1 orange
1 cup unsweetened pineapple juice		
¼ cup lime juice		
sea salt		

Preparation:

Peel, pit, and chop up the mangoes and papaya into bite size pieces.

Peel, take off the membrane, and chop up the orange.

Deseed the jalapeno peppers and chop them up.

Peel and mince the ginger.

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring the mixture to a boil.

Turn the heat down and simmer for about 20 minutes, until the sauce begins to thicken.



Prickly Pear Cactus



Mix prickly pear cactus juice with honey and egg yolk to make a cure for burns.

Gloria: What are you making Aunt Carmen?

Aunt Carmen: I am making some minced cactus.

Gloria: Why do you always eat cactus?

Aunt Carmen: Because your Uncle Arturo has a high sugar level in his blood and we don't want him to have a problem with diabetes.

Gloria: And what does that have to do with eating cactus?

Aunt Carmen: Well, cactus is good at preventing and treating diabetes. And remember that cactus has many uses. We also use it in many meals and in poultices for cuts and wounds, like that one time when José fell - remember that?

Gloria: Yes, I remember.

Aunt Carmen: And even more, cactus has a lot of vitamins and it tastes wonderful, don't you think so?

Gloria: Yes, I like it to. I'm going to tell my Mom to cook with cactus more often. See you later Aunt Carmen!

Aunt Carmen: Move along, little one.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

In some parts of Mexico, prickly pear cactus is used as fodder for cattle and milk cows. It adds a pleasant color to the butter and the milk is less fatty.



Medical studies say that prickly pear cactus is effective at preventing and treating diabetes because it helps to lower blood sugar. It is also good at treating constipation, intestinal problems, arthritis, and inflammations associated with rheumatism, to kill intestinal worms, to lose weight, and to bring down cholesterol levels. The prickly pear cactus is full of protein, vitamins, minerals, alkaloids, and fiber. Prickly pear cacti also have high levels of calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin C and prickly pear fruits, *tunas*, are also a very good source of vitamins.

Use

Recipe:

Prickly Pear Cactus Shake to Prevent or Treat Diabetes

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup of cucumber (peeled)
- ¼ cup of chayote fruit (take out thorns, but leave the peel intact)
- 1 cambric nopal cactus (cleaned)
- 1 orange (juiced)
- ½ cup of pineapple
- ½ cup of water

Preparation:

Blend all the ingredients together one by one. Drink the shake with breakfast. Do not strain. Enjoy its effect and its flavor!



Medicines of the Jungle

Rue



Doña Sara: Good afternoon Patty. How are you?

Doña Patricia: Well, not so well Sara. I have a really strong headache because my stomach hurts.

Doña Sara: Have you had some tea?

Doña Patricia: Yes, but it didn't seem to help much.

Doña Sara: But, what kind did you have? Was it rue tea?

Doña Patricia: No, I don't have any.

Doña Sara: Well, that's what you need. Rue is very good for headaches. I have some at home. I'm going to go look for it for you right now and I'll be right back.

Doña Patricia: Thank you Sara. I'd really appreciate that.



Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Scientific studies show rue to be a natural analgesic (pain-killer). Rue also kills intestinal worms, and is anxiolytic, meaning it reduces anxiety. It reduces menstrual and stomach pains, kills off warts, and decreases sciatic pains. A tea made with rue leaves is a good antidote for scorpion and spider bites, as well as snakebites. Apply the leaves to the affected area after using them in the tea.

NOTE: Rue has been known to cause abortions and hemorrhaging when taken in large quantities. Pregnant women should use it very sparingly.

Did you know that rue is also known as “herb of grace”?



Use

To Make Tea:

Add a small handful of fresh or dried rue leaves and root to 2 cups of simmering water. Strain and drink.

It can also be used topically on snake, spider, and scorpion bites.



Aloe Vera

Traditionally, many people plant an aloe vera plant at the entrance of their house.



Jesús: Mom! I burnt my hand! Ouch! That really hurts!

Sra. Pérez: Don't cry little one. Let me look at it. You poor thing, right now we'll make it better.

Jesús: Are you going to put ice or butter on it?

Sra. Pérez: No, those things really aren't good for burns. Put your hand under some cold water as I go look for some aloe vera.

Jesús: Ah... it doesn't feel so bad when I put it under the water.

Sra. Pérez: Good. Now that I have the aloe vera cut and ready, let me have your hand.

Jesús: Hmmm... now it feels a little better.

Sra. Pérez: Well, it's still going to hurt for a little while. But, it'll heal much quicker with aloe vera.

Jesús: It's a good thing we have aloe vera on hand.

Sra. Pérez: Yes, why do you think everybody keeps aloe vera at the front door? Aloe vera is really good for healing a lot of things like hemorrhoids, ulcers, and other skin problems. Now how do you feel? Does it still hurt a lot?

Jesús: It almost doesn't hurt at all. Thank you Mom.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

Medical studies find aloe vera to be the best external remedy for any kind of burn, including burns caused by radiation. It is also very good internally for the intestines and ulcers. The yellow juice closest to the surface of the plant's skin is also a laxative. Aloe vera stimulates the healing of infections and cuts without leaving scars. It is good for treating hemorrhoids, constipation, abdominal pain, intestinal worms and bacterial infections.

NOTE: Aloe vera should not be consumed during pregnancy.



Medicines of the Jungle

Did you know that indigenous people of Mexico refer to aloe vera as “the magic wand from heaven”?



Use

To treat most burns:

Put the burned area under cold water. Then, open the leaf of the aloe vera plant and apply the gel and liquid immediately.

To treat sunburns:

Apply the plant's liquid directly to the affected areas.

To Treat Fevers:

Place it on your forehead to combat fever.

To treat inflamed intestines or constipation:

Take a spoonful of the pulp of the plant 2 times a day.

NOTE: Don't eat too much as it can cause cramping!

To treat hemorrhoids:

Place a piece of leaf pulp just inside the anus for the night, every night, until the symptoms disappear.

Comunidad Indígena de Chacala

