



Mexico City's Canal De La Viga.

## Spanish Explorers Found the Valley of Mexico a Real New World Venice

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

MEXICO CITY'S magnificent cathedral, richly adorned Sagrario, and extensive national palace greatly impress the present-day visitor as he stands and gazes across the Zocalo, or Great Square, for the first time.

But suppose the scene should fade away and be replaced by that which greeted Cortez and his followers in 1519. The modern traveler would be as enchanted by the barbaric splendor before his eyes as were the Spaniards, and, like Bernal Diaz del Castillo, soldier-chronicler of the Conquest, he might well be moved to ask, "Are not these things a dream?" For the civic center of Mexico City was once the Teopan, or Temple enclosure, of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital.

Where the cathedral and Sagrario now stand rose the great pyramid topped by its temples to the gods of war and of rain. The national palace occupies the site of Montezuma's palace. In the plaza stood the massive circular stone used for sacrificial combat.

Behind the stone rose the temple of the god of the air, and not far distant was the sinister mass of the heads of victims offered to the gods. In front of this stood a devotional altar for worship, and near by was a pool of water for ceremonial observances.

Numerous other temples were scattered about the enclosure. There were houses occupied by the priests, palaces for officials, even a zoo and an aviary.

**Aztec Influence Still Seen.** Other parts of the metropolis suggest similar contrasts, for this capital city of early Aztecs and modern Mexicans is a veritable storehouse of New World history.

On all sides the eye is met by remnants of ancient glories side by side with Twentieth-century splendors. There are places where only a few short steps separate the finest of aboriginal art from the ultra-modern murals of Diego Rivera. Sixteenth-century buildings adjoin apartment houses of the latest style. Smiling faces of natives thronging the streets bear the stamp of Aztec lineage.

Ancient industries are reflected in today's gold, wood, and featherwork; and architectural ornamentation on newly rising structures exhibits the influence of Aztec design and symbol. It is this pleasing blend of old and new that gives the city its unique charm.

The story of the Aztecs is much better known than that of many New World peoples. There are native manuscripts called "codices," detailing in pictographic form certain phases of their history. Descriptions of the city and accounts of the life and customs of its inhabitants were written by some of the Conquistadores and by several of the priests who accompanied them.

Besides the pictographic stories which supplement the Spanish records, helpful narratives were penned by a few native scholars, taught to write by their conquerors. Added to these documents is the evidence still being obtained from extensive archeological and historical researches by experts of the Mexican government and by other investigators, from both America and Europe.

The foundation of the Aztec nation and its subsequent florescence occurred at a time when the Old world was sunk in the depths of the Middle Ages.

Entering the Valley of Mexico early in the Fourteenth century as a crude hunting people, the Aztecs found various communities around the borders of a great lake and came into contact with a culture which was very high.

According to some accounts, they settled near Chapultepec and came under the influence of the Acolhuans, from whom they received many cultural traits. Between about 1367 and 1376, the Acolhuans drove them out and forced them to take refuge on two small reed-covered mud banks or islands in the center of the lake.

The settlements on the islands grew into two towns, Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco. They appear to have risen side by side and progressed as independent units for more than a century, although the space between them was reduced to a little more than a broad canal. Late in the Fifteenth century, Tlatelolco was conquered by the sixth ruler of Tenochtitlan and the two were united to form one great city.

The legendary explanation for the choice of the present site of the city is not in full agreement with the historical facts, but is more picturesque. According to tradition, the Aztecs were told that when they saw an eagle eating a serpent there they should stop and found their dynasty.

Upon reaching the borders of a large lake they saw a beautiful island, and the priest who led them beheld a huge eagle with a struggling snake in its talons. The bird came to rest on a cactus plant and proceeded to kill and devour the reptile. The Aztecs were overjoyed at this, because their prophecy was fulfilled, and they set about establishing their city.

The tradition is symbolized today by the eagle, serpent, and cactus in the Mexican coat of arms and flag.

**Origin of Floating Gardens.** As long as the Aztecs were weak and hemmed in by their foes, they subsisted on fish, birds, aquatic plants, and such vegetables as they were able to grow on floating gardens, or chinampas. The latter were formed by heaping up soft mud from the lake on rafts made from reeds and wattlework.

These floating islands gradually increased in size. The interlacing roots of the plants made them more compact and eventually anchored them to the bottom of the lake. More and more were built and as their number increased they became a series of rectangular plots separated by canals just wide enough for the passage of canoes.

The gardens of Xochimilco, not far from Mexico City, are a present-day illustration of this type of made land and communicating waterways.

By the time of the Conquest Tenochtitlan was a veritable New World Venice; in fact, one of the Spaniards with Cortez, and the conqueror himself, called it that.

One of the soldiers in his journal describes it as a place of many wide and handsome streets formed half of hard earth like a brick pavement and half of canal, so that the people moved about either by land or by water.

The Aztecs did not become a real power in the valley until their fourth ruler, Itzcoatl, 1427-1440, became head of the "kingdom." Itzcoatl had a famous general named Maxtli, who conquered many neighboring cities and tribes and exacted from these subject peoples tribute which enriched the Aztecs.

From this time on, under five succeeding rulers, Tenochtitlan prospered and expanded, until by the time of the conquest tribute was pouring into the coffers of Montezuma II from all of southern Mexico, the Vera Cruz coastal plain, and even from Guatemala.

**They Were an Industrious People.**

Agriculture was important, and, while many vegetables were raised in the environs of the city, most of the products came from surrounding precincts. A variety of maize, or Indian corn, was developed which matured rapidly, an essential quality for the high, arid plateau country. Other products were sweet potatoes, tomatoes, squash, beans, peppers, cacao or chocolate, tobacco, cotton, hemp, rubber, and copal.

The gold and silversmith's art was highly developed. There were numerous wood carvers, workers in stone, makers of elaborate turquoise mosaics, and producers of featherwork.

## SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Carter Field  
FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT



Washington.—In addition to the reorganization bill, generally regarded as the major rebuff that President Roosevelt has received from congress, there have been the Supreme court enlargement, the St. Lawrence seaway, and the World court. It is interesting that Roosevelt's three predecessors, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, all favored three of these four proposals—all except that regarding the Supreme court.

Gradually, sentiment for the United States joining the World court has become feebler and feebler as the League of Nations has declined in prestige. The St. Lawrence seaway has lost rather than gained in sentiment for reasons having nothing to do with politics.

When the seaway was first proposed, the most enthusiastic advocates were from the Middle and Northwestern states. They wanted to make it possible for ocean steamships to get into the Great Lakes, their object being to cut the freight rate on wheat from St. Paul and Minneapolis and other centers in the wheat country, to Liverpool, as for generations the world price of wheat has been the price at Liverpool, less the freight rate from the point of origin to Liverpool.

But since the proposal was first advocated the United States has been almost a total loss so far as wheat exports are concerned. For several years now we have exported little or no wheat, sometimes actually importing a little more—hard wheat from Canada—than we exported.

Other farm exports have declined as well, and there has never been any necessity for cutting the freight rate on the one line of exports that has really held firm, manufactured goods such as machinery, automobiles, etc. The real difficulty in the path of increased exports here has to do with quotas rather than costs, hence has to be left to negotiations rather than to maneuvering to cut the freight cost.

### Opposition Continues

Which explains why Secretary of State Cordell Hull's reciprocal trade treaty policy has made such a hit with automobile and other manufacturers who believe they can compete with the whole world if artificial limitations and barriers are removed.

President Roosevelt's interest in the St. Lawrence seaway has always been because of the electric power possibilities rather than the idea of bringing ocean steamships to the door of the Middle West. But the political motive power back of this project has always been the cheapening of the freight rate on grain to Liverpool, the real value of which has now practically disappeared.

Meanwhile the economic objections to the St. Lawrence project have remained unchanged. There may not be much grain moving overseas, but the shipping interests of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Norfolk, Savannah, and even Jacksonville and New Orleans, have not relaxed in their opposition to it.

### Record Rather Good

Saving his face on the tax on undistributed corporation earnings was an achievement for President Roosevelt which will probably never be accurately measured. But the fact is that there were plenty of votes in both houses of congress, before the conference committee reached its compromise, to approve total repeal of this tax. It is perfectly true that the bill will provide the end of this tax after 1939, but the retention of any part of shadow of it is actually flying in the face of the will of a considerable majority of congress.

On the whole, it makes the record of the President, so far as his relations with congress are concerned, rather a good one—much better than the actual feeling on Capitol Hill justifies, and much better than the country has come to think in the last month, especially since the house rejected the reorganization bill.

But while there was an unusual amount of publicity for this White House rebuff on the reorganization bill, actually the President had failed to get something which every President for a good many years has wanted, and more than a few tried to get, with little or no success.

Everyone familiar with Washington knows that government bureau chiefs gradually acquire power with the house and senate. It is natural and human, however bad it may be from time to time in its results. But there is not only patronage to be considered—the placing of friends of senators and representatives in good jobs on the federal pay roll, and the looking out for them after they are placed, to be sure they get promotions and pay boosts when it is legally possible. That would be enough to establish personal bonds between the bureau chiefs and the national legislators. But there is also a constant line of communications between the offices on Capitol Hill and the various offices.

For example, when Congressman Blank of Kansas wants to know how much money has been paid out in wheat benefits to the counties in his congressional district, he doesn't ask the secretary of agriculture for the information. It would take too long. His secretary calls up the particular office down at what used to be Triple A which would have the exact figures on tap, gets the information, and fires it back at his inquiring constituent, writes it in the proposed radio talk, or does whatever the inquirer had in mind.

How does Blank's secretary know which office to call? His secretary, if he or she is half as good as the average congressional secretary, knows a lot more than that: the name of the clerks who do the work, the ones who know their stuff and those who are just dumb, and a lot of other pieces of data which would be enormously valuable if there really were a merit system in the government.

But the point is that this builds up a friendly feeling between the units of the government, many of them so insignificant that they are almost unknown, and the men who do the voting of appropriations to maintain them. When a representative, no matter whether he is a Democrat in good standing at the White House or a Republican the President loathes, wants something from a government bureau he is pretty apt to get it. And quickly. And when a senator asks for any little favor there is just no length to which the downtown folk will not go.

So it naturally follows that when these bureaucrats are terribly worried about something—like a shift of their functions to some other department—they get a sympathetic hearing on Capitol Hill.

### Beaten by Butter!

Argentine butter beat President Roosevelt on the reorganization bill, according to the latest story going around the Capitol corridors. Of course the majority by which the bill was defeated was only eight, so a change of five members would have reversed the result. Virginia could have done it. Tammany could have done it. Any one of a lot of little groups could have done it.

And so could the five Progressives from Wisconsin who surprised Sen. Robert M. La Follette and everybody else when they voted against the President on this crucial test.

The story goes that a group of five Wisconsin dairymen were in Washington with their families to see the cherry blossoms. At the hotel, where they were stopping, one of the party spoke up at breakfast about the butter.

"Where do you suppose they get it?" he demanded. "It's not like any butter I know."

"I don't know," said a second, "but I do know that I don't think it is as good as our butter at home."

"I think it's terrible," said one of the wives, "and I'm going to tell the waiter about it. They ought to buy our good Wisconsin butter. We are spending plenty down here."

"That's reciprocity for you," laughed her husband. Which word was recalled by all of them later in the day.

So they sent for the head waiter. He sent for the manager. Finally it came out. It was Argentine butter.

The party had intended to leave for home that afternoon, but this news about butter changed their minds. With one accord they agreed to turn their little vacation into a lobbying expedition.

### Big Butter Men Busy

A couple of hours later all five of the men were in the house office building, seeking out the congressmen from Wisconsin.

"Why is it," they demanded, "that the best hotels in this town use Argentine butter? We thought there was a tariff on butter high enough to keep foreign competition out. We had trouble with Danish butter years ago, but we thought we had fixed that with a tariff so high it couldn't climb over. Now what?"

One after another the congressmen patiently explained that the tariff had been high, but that Secretary of State Cordell Hull, in negotiating his reciprocal trade treaties, had marked down the rates on butter, and, under the most favored nation clause, if he marked it down in one treaty, this reduction applied to every other nation unless it could be demonstrated that some nation was discriminating in its tariffs against the United States.

"The theory is," explained one of the congressmen, "that we have to buy something from them, if we are going to sell other goods to them. It helps trade. It helps break down economic barriers. It makes for peace."

"Make it something else than butter," retorted the dairymen, with one accord.

They must have been threatening, but anyway the five Wisconsin Progressives voted against the President on the reorganization bill.

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## WHAT TO EAT and WHY ★ ★ ★

C. Houston Goudiss Noted Food Authority

### Describes the ACID- and ALKALINE-ASH FOODS and Explains Their Role in Maintaining the ACID-BASE BALANCE of the Body ★ ★ ★

By C. HOUSTON GOUDISS  
6 East 39th Street, New York City.

ACIDITY is the topic of the hour. On every side we hear people complaining that they have too much acid in their systems, that they suffer from acid stomach, acid headaches, acid mouth, acidosis. In fact, most adults fancy themselves victims of a great battle between acid and alkaline forces, with the acid having the better of it.

They confuse gastric acidity—which is entirely normal, for the healthy stomach is always strongly acid—with the potential acidity of foods which leave an acid residue following digestion. And many of them are convinced that they should take drastic steps to overcome the danger of acidosis.

#### The Vogue of Acidosis

There are fashions in disease, just as in dress, home furnishings and automobiles. Ten years ago, we heard much about the evils of auto-intoxication, and it was some time before people realized that they had been misled by the extreme claims of those who had some sort of remedy to sell. And

now it is acidosis that is the most talked of complaint. Friends caution one another against this or that food, with the mistaken idea that it causes or aggravates an acid condition. Food faddists have frightened thousands by suggesting that acidosis is brought about by mixing various kinds of foods.

#### Health Endangered

Indeed, we have come to a point where the fear of a so-called acid condition is assuming proportions which indicate the possibility of real trouble unless the American people get the true facts and put aside these foolish delusions.

Physiologists believe that fear and worry have a detrimental effect on digestion, and, in turn, on the general health. Thus eating meals in constant fear of acidity may upset the digestion and bring about the very symptoms that you are trying to avoid. One well-known authority contends that perhaps 90 per cent of digestive distress, attributed to the kind or combinations of food eaten, is actually due to unfavorable mental or emotional states, and other causes such as over-eating, even when fatigued, or consuming at one meal too many foods that are difficult to digest. It, therefore, becomes apparent that thousands of people are contributing to their own discomfort as a result of fear, ignorance, or a blind belief in misleading claims which are opposed to scientific facts.

#### Acidosis Uncommon

The danger is not from acidosis, but from the fear of this bugbear, and from self medication in the belief that certain remedies are required to overcome a fancied condition. For in spite of the large amount of acid produced in metabolism, the blood normally remains remarkably constant and slightly alkaline, due to a highly efficient buffer system.

Perhaps you wonder, if this is so, why doctors and dietitians talk so much about the acid-base balance.

#### The Acid-Base Balance

To understand this phrase, you must know that every food leaves an ash when burned in the body, just as ashes remain when coal or wood is burned in a furnace. In the body, the ash consists of valuable minerals which are required in large amounts to maintain optimal health.

Some foods, such as meat, fish, eggs and cereals, leave an acid ash because the predominating

minerals are phosphorus, chlorine and sulphur. Other foods, chiefly milk and most fruits and vegetables, leave an alkaline ash because the remaining minerals are principally calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium. These are the base-forming foods.

Besides the alkaline ash and acid ash foods, there is a group of foods, including sugar, cornstarch and purified fats, which are so highly refined that no minerals remain after they are burned; and some other foods, such as butter and cream, leave a balance of the two types of ash. These are known as neutral foods.

#### Cannot Trust Your Tongue

The sense of taste cannot be relied upon as a guide in determining which foods are acid and which alkaline. For example, cereals, which are bland to the taste, have an acid reaction following digestion. Bread, likewise, is acid forming, although you would not suspect that fact from its taste. On the other hand, potatoes, though somewhat similar to bread in flavor and food value, are one of our most valuable alkaline foods, and dried lima beans are the most highly alkaline of any food known.

If it seems curious that such bland foods should have an acid ash, you may find it even harder to believe that oranges, lemons, grapefruit, peaches and tomatoes, which taste acid in the mouth, leave an alkaline ash following digestion. But the fact is that the body performs a clever bit of chemical engineering and the final effect on the blood is alkaline.

#### Homemaker's Responsibility

A balanced diet must include sufficient base-forming foods to neutralize and counter-balance the effects of the acids formed in metabolism.

That is one reason why it is so important for the homemaker to provide her family with plenty of milk, fruits and vegetables, in addition to the necessary meat, fish, eggs and cereals.

In general, one is likely to feel better when base-forming foods predominate, at least slightly, in the diet over acid-forming foods. Some authorities believe that this may be due not so much to their effect on the acid-base balance as to the fact that they provide such splendid amounts of vitamins, minerals and fiber.

However, one must not make the mistake of becoming so enthusiastic over building a highly alkaline diet that one overlooks good foods necessary to round out a balanced diet.

To those homemakers who take seriously the important job of feeding a family, and wish to be correctly informed, I shall gladly send a chart showing which foods are alkaline and which acid. It can be used as a helpful guide in planning a balanced diet.

Send for this chart and increase your food knowledge. In the meantime, don't under any circumstances allow misguided individuals to frighten you into joining the vast army of acid-minded people who are so concerned over the possibilities of acidosis that they haven't time to enjoy life.

#### Questions Answered

Miss M. V.—Indeed I am not against the eating of fried foods, except in abnormal conditions where, for some reason, the fat intake must be restricted. The moderate use of fried foods, which

### Have You a Question? Ask C. Houston Goudiss

C. Houston Goudiss has put at the disposal of readers of this newspaper all the facilities of his famous Experimental Kitchen Laboratory in New York City. He will gladly answer questions concerning foods, diet, nutrition, and their relation to health. You are also invited to consult him in matters of personal hygiene. It's not necessary to write a letter unless you desire, for post-card inquiries will receive the same careful attention. Address him at 6 East 39th Street, New York City.

have been properly cooked, makes the diet palatable and interesting. Mrs. S. T. R.—No, egg whites most certainly are not toxic, except to people who have an allergy toward this food. For all normal individuals, they offer an excellent source of protein.

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