

[PDF] On Mexican Time: A New Life In San Miguel

Tony Cohan - pdf download free book

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Author: Tony Cohan

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Description:

In the mid-1980s, Tony Cohan and his artist wife, Masako, decided they had had enough of the hectic pace and inherent insecurities of life in Los Angeles and made tracks for the historic town of San Miguel de Allende in central Mexico. At first they rented rooms in a hotel. Then, when the hotel became less appealing, they graduated to renting an apartment. Almost inevitably, they eventually found themselves buying a 250-year-old hacienda on the verge of collapse, with wonderfully elegant Spanish colonial architecture and a garden brimming with papayas, avocados, and custard apples.

What followed was a love affair with a country and its people that has endured. *On Mexican Time* is a lyrical attempt to capture the Mexican magic that bewitched the two of them. Cohan introduces us to a quirky cast of Mexicans and expats, including murderers, idealists, philanderers, and writers.

Spanning 15 years, the book conveys something of the curiously intangible passage of time, as we watch girls become mothers, marriages drift apart, and friends come and go. The text is rich with sensuous details, and Cohan is excellent at conveying the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of a country that he clearly adores.

On Mexican Time is much less of a glib chronicle than other books of the "charming new life in paradise" genre. Although he is not averse to the odd moment of portentousness, Cohan makes a gentle and elegant guide through the experiences of expat life in San Miguel. --*Toby Green* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly In 1985, novelist and travel writer Cohan (Canary; *Secular and Sacred*) and his wife, Masako, traveled on a whim to the colorful Mexican town of San Miguel de Allende, where fireworks sputter from wooden towers on feast days, "mariachi singers' plangent howls" season the air, "cats roam the rooftops unimpeded" and "history, religion and ceremony soften the effects of change." Lured back for repeated visits, the Cohans finally made their home there. Casual yet studied in tone, this ode to Cohan's adopted town and nation devotes much space to San Miguel's legends, ancient and modern. The local nunnery's founder, who turned worms into butterflies, may be more fiction than fact. Cohan's acquaintance Ren?, though, is real enough: the story of the murder that the locals believe he committed dominates a disturbing chapter called "The Man Who Was Killed Twice." Hospitality vies with inefficiency to make Cohan's Mexico a place of surprising ease and random hazards: "Mexican buses are reliable, cheap, and safe," but Mexican highway patrolmen demand bribes or worse; a friend of Cohan's dies when a hospital can't get her blood type. The Mexican day seems to last longer, and "nothing happens between two and four." Cohan also presents less serious downsides to his calmer Mexican lifestyle, explaining why it took him so long to get a verandah built on his 250-year-old house. The last few years have seen San Miguel become a destination for hip tourists: Cohan's pleasant account of its former obscurity may send his fans to further crowd its streets. (Jan.)

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