

What's In A Name?

Street signs aren't always easy to locate in Los Cabos. Giving and receiving directions often require referencing landmarks. Even if you can't always locate the sign, be assured, the street has a name and most often the name is a significant historical one.

Street names, called *Calles* (ki-yays) in Spanish are part of Mexico's cultural code. Among other things they depict milestone battles and honor legendary men. They typically follow a theme, sometimes representing unique regional traits, like our street Pescadero (fisherman) or the names of the states throughout Mexico.

The number one street name found in every Mexican city, big or small, is Benito Juárez. He was the beloved peasant Indian boy who rose to be President in 1860. Juárez is known for his honest intelligence while crusading to improve the lives of impoverished Mexicans and fighting against French domination.

Entering the downtown area of San José del Cabo from the highway, there is a one-way street in and a one-way street out. Many people refer to them as the down-street and the up-street. Both streets have names with considerable historical significance.

The down-street as you enter San José is called Ignacio Zaragoza or Zaragoza for short. He was the General who defeated the French in the Battle of Puebla on May 5th. The famous *Cinco de Mayo* victory is commemorated every year with festivities and is designated a national holiday.

The up-street as you leave San José is named after a prominent politician and lawyer, Manuel Doblado. (Doblado for short) He too played a part in preventing Mexico from becoming a country run by a French monarchy.

Going back further in history you'll find streets throughout Mexico named 16 de Septiembre. The sixteenth of September in 1810 was the day Miguel Hidalgo (Hidalgo is another famous street name) rang the bell of his small church calling for all the exploited and oppressed Mexicans to revolt against the Spaniards. That was the beginning of the ten year War of Independence. The anniversary of this historic date is celebrated in every Mexican town square with *El Grito de Independencia*. It is a boisterous evening re-enacting the proud call of *Viva Mexico*.

Paying attention to the names designated to streets can teach you about the places you visit in Mexico. The names tell you who or what is important to that town, that region or the whole country. Following street signs, the ones you can find, can lead you to learning more than just how to arrive at someplace.