

Malintzin's Diary

9 Septiembre 1519

I am Malintzin. You are Jerónimo de Aguilar.

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z

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1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

16 Septiembre 1519

Hello	You're welcome	Was, are, is, has, had, be	Where are you from? I am from...	Eat
Goodbye	I am good	Has happened	Go	Breakfast
How are you?	I am bad	(Will) Have	Run	Dinner
Thank you	I am great	Help	I am a translator.	Supper

23 Septiembre 1519

Hello, I am Malintzin. How are you?

Dog	Corn	Bread/Tortillas	I like...	I don't want...
Cat	Beans	Flour	I want...	I have...
Horse	Pork	Beer	I love...	I don't have
Pig	Garden	Water	I hate...	Get/Take
Goat	Squash	Hot Chocolate/ Cacao	I dislike...	Share Make Buy

30 Septiembre 1519

I like corn and dogs. I want a garden.

Girl	King	Baker	my/mine	it/its
Boy	Queen	Soldier	he/him/his	we/us
Man	Prince	Basket-weaver	she/her/hers	you/your/yours
Woman	Princess	Servant/Slave/Captive	they/them	Español(a)/Spain

Baby	Noble	Free man/citizen	their/theirs	Indio/a/New Spain
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7 Octubre 1519

I was a noble, and you are a soldier. I am a woman. I go to the market. I am from New Spain.

And/but/or	First	Another/other	Purple	Skirt
To/with	Second	Later	Pink	Shirt
For/nor/yet	Third	Red	Gray	Dress
Some/each	Finally	Yellow	Black	Pants
Away/Leave	Then/next	Green	White	Shawl
A/an/the	Now	Blue	Brown	Shoes/Sandals

First, I go to the market. Second, I go see the baker and get flour and tortillas for supper. Finally, I go home and make supper with the other servants. I am red and white skirt. He is blue shirt and brown pants.

14 Octubre 1519

The dog is brown and white. I like red and yellow flowers.

Beautiful/ugly	Big/small	Mother	Cousin	Sibling(s)
Fast/slow	Far/Near	Father	Grandmother	Niece
More/less	Long/wide	Brother	Grandfather	Nephews
Hot/cold	Up/down	Sister	Great-grand...	Lover
Tall/short	Yes/no/maybe	Aunt	Spouse	Friend
Thin/fat	Left/right	Uncle	Child/Children	Enemy

My mother is short, but my father was tall. I have one brother from another father. I love my grandmother. Some *Indios* are enemies.

21 Octubre 1519

My family is far away.

Monday	January	August	Year	Evening
Tuesday	February	September	Spring	Night/day
Wednesday	March	October	Summer	Light/dark

Thursday	April	November	Fall/Autumn	Today
Friday	May	December	Winter	Tomorrow
Saturday	June	Month	Morning	I am - years old
Sunday	July	Day	Afternoon	I was born in...

I am 19 years old, and was born in the spring.

28 Octubre 1519

It is *cool* this morning.

This/that	Happy	Angry	Grieving	Annoyed
These/those	Sad	Nervous	Joking	Hungry
Who, what, when, where, why, how	Embarrassed	Joyful	Excited	Tired/ Exhausted

I am excited to *learn*. I want to be happy and *free*.

4 Noviembre 1519

I love being outside.

Outside/Inside	Monkey	Book	Capture
House/tent	Bugs	Read	Save
Wood/tree	Animals	Write	Release
Jungle/Sky/ Ground	God/Jesus/Virgin Mary	Talk/Speak	Kill/Execute
Jaguar/Leopard	Teach/Learn	Free	Betray/trust

15 Marzo 1520

Spring is near here, thank God! I don't like the cold. Jerónimo is still helping me with lessons, and I learn more and more each day. Another soldier, Juan, got me this book to write in. They say I learn fast. We have been in Tenochtitlan for 4 months. I have been translating for the Aztec leader, Moctezuma, and my master, Cortés. Their peace remains for now, but it can leave in a moment. I am friends with Atzi, one of the servants captured with me from Putunchan. She is my age, and belongs to Jerónimo. More later, she and I have to go to the market now.

17 Mayo 1520

I had no idea how big Tenochtitlan was when I first arrived here, but it is huge! I remembered hearing about it from my father, but I did not think I would even come to it. And think, I've been here over 6 months! Atzi and I do not get a lot of time to explore or have time to ourselves, but we make the best of it. She is expecting a little one soon, which will mean extra work and time for the both of us. Jerónimo will not have much time to help, because Cortés keeps him busy. Not much has changed between Cortés and Moctezuma; we meet about every 2 weeks. I think I turned 20 last month, but with no calendar, I am not sure. I have to go, Itzma is calling me.

5 Diciembre 1520

We are still in Tenochtitlan! Not much has changed since we arrived, but tensions seem to be increasing among the españoles and indios, but they are fairly mild. I do not know why we are still here. It can't be for any good if we remain here longer. I fear Cortés may be waiting for just the right moment to take the city, just like the other ones he has conquered. I almost lost this book to Itzma the other day, but I hid it just in time. Itzma is one of the head servants over all of us girls and the house we are staying in. Slaves like me aren't technically supposed to know how to write or have their own books, but since I belong to Cortés, it is easier for me to get away with it. Atzi had a little girl named Tayanna in the summer, so she is about 4 or 5 months old now. She is one of the sweetest children I have ever met, I absolutely adore her! She looks just like her mother.

14 Febrero 1521

Whew! I finally have a moment to myself! We had much to do for the Christmas celebration, and then there was much to do to prepare for the next year. There has been little time to sit and do nothing. As I write this, it is late at night, and I have stolen away from Cortés for the moment. But back to my original point: I had not heard about this Christmas before Cortés and his men came, but it seems like fun! Unless you have to do a lot of work with little help like we did. It is about this man, Jesus, who was also God, and when he was born from a virgin Mary. It doesn't make a lot of sense, but the españoles are very passionate about everyone knowing about it and celebrating it. Oh well. We have not left Tenochtitlan, and I think Moctezuma and the people are becoming slightly put out with us. Maybe if Cortés and his men put a little more effort in making their stay easier things would be better, but alas, that is not for me to say. Today was a little easier, as I have some time to write. I went to the market, bought some food and a new material for a skirt for myself and Atzi, and helped make supper for everyone.

25 Mayo 1521

We just moved outside of the city. What I feared would happen is now happening. Cortés is besieging my beloved Tenochtitlan. He has been receiving help

from a group called Tlaxcalans, who especially hate the Aztec. They don't care for the Spanish either, but as Jerónimo says, they are between a rock and a hard place. I was with him as Cortés stated his terms of rule, but Moctezuma would not bend. I fear awful things will happen to his people. It is only a matter of time before the city falls.

10 Julio 1521

The city is falling from the inside out. There are rumors of sickness, specifically something called smallpox, running through the city. It kills many who fall ill. There are other bad things going on, but I will not speak of them here. This is my escape, at least for a time. Little Tayanna has also fallen ill, and I can only pray that she lives through it. Atzi is fine so far, as am I. Cortés expects the city, the crown jewel of the Aztecs, to fall at any moment. I wish there was something I could do about it, but I am just a translator, a slave. Aside from the sieges, camping has been interesting. Many of the soldiers have been bitten by mosquitoes, and some have fallen ill thanks to the bites. Some curse as they scratch, except for a few of them. Jerónimo and Juan do not, but they also found out from Atzi and I how to keep from being bitten so bad. They are two of the only level-topped (is that right?) of the entire bunch. I hope this horrible war will end soon.

13 Agosto 1521

The siege just ended today. Moctezuma has been executed. It is an anxious and grievous time for those of us under Cortés' servitude. I'll write more later.

19 Junio 1523

Today marks the birth of my son, Martín. He is a healthy baby boy, and a sizable one as well. I did not know I could come to love someone so much, but I do! Technically he belongs to Cortés, but Cortés is not around very often, as it is with these men. But he loves him, and talks of making him a legitimate son. We'll see how that goes; I'm not expecting much. No, I am not married, although I sometimes wish I were, but I try to make the best of things. Cortés seems to respect me, as far as respect goes for a slave, but I do not easily forget the trap I was placed in by my step-father when I was 10 years old. I did not care too much what they did to me at first, though I still wanted to be free, but now that I have a child to care for, that has changed. I want to give us both a chance to live freely outside of Cortés control, even if it means getting close to Cortés to do it.

8 Junio 1524

We just received word that one of Cortés' previous generals, Cristóbal de Olid, is setting up his own government in Honduras. Cortés' was not happy. Jerónimo and Juan managed to calm him down, but from my understanding, plans are being put into motion to march down to Honduras. I'm sure I will be needed to translate. On a

different subject, my Martín is nearly a year old! He is growing so fast, he will soon be playing with Tayanna and Atzi's two other children. He looks more and more like his father everyday, but at the very least, he got my brown eyes and love of the outdoors. I smile as I write this, for it is impossible to keep him indoors for any long period of time. I cherish these moments in my heart, because soon enough, Cortés will be taking him and molding him into the man he wants my son to become.

4 Octubre 1524

We will soon be on the road again. We, Cortés, his household, soldiers, and I, are indeed travelling to Honduras to put down this rebellion. However, that means I have to leave Martín behind. He is only a babe, and would not survive the jungle, but it may be years before I get to see him again. He is to stay with one of Cortés' cousins, a Juan de Altamirano. I hope he remembers me, but I doubt it.

There are several silver linings to this trip that I did *not* anticipate. One is that I am to be married to Juan Jaramillo (the Juan I have briefly mentioned before) before the trip gets underway. There were not many options for a husband anyway (one was too old, one is inclined never to marry, and the third was Juan), but Juan was the best one (he is also the best looking of the bunch, even if his beard is a little bushier than I would like).

And because I am getting married I am also being freed!!! I never thought I would see the day! I have been in slavery for fourteen years, and at long last, my freedom has been returned to me. I also get a dowry of an encomienda in Olutla.

How did I manage all that, you ask? I will tell you. I respectfully told Cortés I would leave our son behind on the condition that I picked the encomienda for the dowry, and that I was freed. A free woman cannot travel alone without attracting unwanted attention, so I also suggested that I be allowed to marry before we left. We could not marry for obvious reasons, so Cortés asked if I had anyone in mind. Juan seemed like the kind of person I could grow to love (we have talked on several occasions, and he is someone that is comfortable with himself and thinks highly of the translating duties I carry out) so I suggested him, and Cortés agreed to give his blessing. I knew Cortés needed me, so I knew I had a bit of leverage on my side. By Jesus' hand it all worked out! I am free, and can make a better life for myself and my child! I will miss my son dearly, though, and think of him every day.

15 Noviembre 1524

We have officially begun our journey, though not without a few mishaps. Poor Juan lost his plates and clothing in the river crossing, and I lost a trunk of clothes. Martín is safe with Cortés' cousin, and Atzi and her three children are with us in the jungle. Jerónimo had no one able to keep an eye on them, and Atzi was needed for the trip. From Tenochtitlan, we crossed over into Chapultepec, then over the river to Olutla (where much of our wedding gifts were lost), then stopped at Coatzacoalcos for a week.

I gathered many of the leaders in the area so that Cortés could speak to them, and I also got the chance to speak with my mother and brother. It was a joyous occasion, as I never thought I would get to see them again. My brother, Yaotl, has grown immensely since I saw him last. My mother has changed much, but then again, it has been 14 years. My step-father was not around, but that was of no consequence. He was the one that sold me in the first place. We could not remain together long, but I was happy to see my mother and brother's faces once more. I hope Martín is doing well. We have about 200 español soldiers with us, in addition to countless negros and indios. There are about 3,000 of us all together.

15 Februari 1525

We have just arrived in Acalan after making very little progress these past 4 months. Because of faulty guides, exploring outside of where we live, and just general life in the jungle, our group was getting dangerously low on food. Some of the weakest have begun to die. I make sure Atzi and her little ones are well provided for as often as I can. When we first arrived, Cortés, Juan, Jerónimo, and I went to see the king. I convinced him that we were merely passing through, and that he should expect no trouble from us. That seemed to satisfy him, and we were allowed to stay.

5 Marzo 1525

We just left Acalan late this first morning of Lent, and not in the best circumstances. A few days ago, Cortés tortured and executed the Aztec prince, Cuahtemoc, and his cousin, on false rumors of their planning Cortés' murder. The two men, as well as numerous other indios, were tortured separately to determine who started the rumors, and whether they had any sort of merit. I know they didn't, because I had to translate for him. Despite this, Cortés promptly executed Cuahtemoc anyway to prove a point to everyone else. Out of all the times I had to translate for Cortés, this was the hardest. Juan has proven to be a good source of comfort, though, as he knows firsthand how hard it is to watch someone die and not be able to do anything about it. We are now moving Southeast, towards Honduras, and should expect to arrive in the beginning of summer.

23 Junio 1525

Food is scarce for our group. Many have already died, including Atzi's youngest child, Xoco. We have made very little progress overall, and the strain is beginning to wear on our group. If they haven't died, many have taken off into the jungle to escape, and native guides have caused us to go in circles on more than one occasion. I fear that we may not make the end of this expedition alive.

19 Agosto 1525

Praise be to the saints! We are two days away from the settlement Nito! We happened upon two girls gathering food in the clearing, so I went up and asked them how far the nearest town was. It was close by, and gave our group the push it needed to reach the settlement. We are nearly to Honduras!!

24 Agosto 1525

It took us more than two days to arrive at Nito, but we made it! However, the españoles there were also starving, so we've been able to find little food to satisfy our hunger. We also found out that the rebellion in Honduras was put down several months ago, and Cristóbal killed. It seems as though our journey has been pointless, but Cortés is set on going to Honduras anyway, once we have settled for a time and regained our strength. Thank goodness, because I am about 2 months pregnant with Juan's child. I laugh, for timing does not seem to be our strong suit. But back to other affairs. Cortés wants to make sure the government is in good order, and that the indios are behaving as they should. A handful of us, except for Atzi and her two children and the hundreds of others that accompanied us, will leave soon for the settlement Trujillo.

3 Abril 1526

Much has happened since we departed Nito with a handful of people from our group, but most importantly, mine and Juan's daughter María was born today! She was absolutely perfect. I smile every time I see Juan holding her in his arms. She is the first child I can truly call my own, as Martín will remain a part of Cortés' household upon our return. Since we've been here, Cortés has passed a series of laws maintaining Spanish power, as well as keeping up a formal form of slavery. It is one of the many evils perfected by the españoles, and I wish there was something more that could be done about it. Alas, there is only so much that I can do, and even what I can do does not seem like that much. I pray there is a change of heart for our leaders in the future. There has been talk of rebellion in Tenochtitlan (now called Mexico City), so I imagine we will soon be returning. I hope we return soon, as we are currently on a ship bound to Cuba, for I long to see my son and have him meet his little sister.

11 Mayo 1527

It has been so long since I have been able to sit and write, but today I am taking the opportunity I have been given to have some time to myself. After we returned to Tenochtitlan, the city was in an uproar. The men Cortés set up to rule in his absence became greedy, and began fighting among themselves. The rebellion was soon put down, though, and Cortés was back to ruling the city. There were also accusations of him murdering a royal emissary, Luis Ponce de León, as the messenger he had sent into the city died soon after negotiations began. These were soon dismissed, but his reputation has not improved. Even more so after he took doña Isabel to live with him for a time after her husband, Alonso de Grado, died, and when Cortés stripped me of my

encomienda. I've learned to expect the unexpected with that man, but I was not expecting that! There is little that can be done about it, for the land has been reclaimed by others. At the very least, we still have the land that belongs to Juan.

María is now over a year old, and is growing strong and beautiful. Martín has also gotten bigger, and he is nearly four years old now! He is such a handsome boy, and he loves us all very much. Martín is still with Cortés' cousin, but he comes over and visits as often as he can. Juan and I have settled on a piece of land near the square within the city, and it is a beautiful place. There are several flower gardens, which I and my servants have the pleasure of working in, there is a small fountain in the middle of the courtyard, and we have a lovely home. Atzi is with us as well, along with her two daughters (who, I might add, are growing into strong, beautiful women). We are truly blessed. We have also taken in a boy from a noble family, Diego Atempanecatli. He is about ten years old. His parents want him to be able to hold his own in Spanish society but keep a remnant of his Nahuatl identity, so he is staying with us! He is an absolute dear with María and exhibits impeccable manners, but there are times when his energy needs to be toned down.

Juan is also doing well, despite his fellow mens' jests at his present arrangement. I admit, I'm not the typical native bride many imagine themselves to have and to hold, but Juan and I are happy together. He is handsome, charming, funny, and kind, though sometimes a bit withdrawn. But that is just the nature of his position. There are many that rely on him. He enjoys being in solitude every now and again, so it is exhausting when people come to him constantly. As a whole, we have made a nice living for ourselves, and our children do not have to face the prospect of losing their status. For that alone, I am eternally grateful to him.

21 Diciembre 1528

Today marks six months since my little Martín set off with Cortés to Spain. Cortés wanted to go ahead and begin the legitimization process, as well as settle other business with Martín, so they will be gone for several years at least. My heart yearns to see him once more, but I know that isn't possible. When Martín sailed off, I felt it was the last time we would ever see each other. I have seen a glimpse of what he is to become, and I admit, I worry for his character in the company of Cortés. At this moment, all I can do is pray.

Last night, two of our servant girls fell ill. And now, I confess, I feel tired and feverish myself. I must rest.

