|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| time | transcript: |
| 00:00  00:03  00:04  00:06  00:07  00:09  00:11  00:13  00:15  00:16  00:18  00:21  00:23  00:25  00:27  00:28  00:30  00:32  00:34  00:35  00:37  00:38  00:40  00:54  00:56  00:58  00:59  01:01  01:02  01:06  01:08  01:10  01:11  01:14  01:16  01:18  01:21  01:23  01:25  01:26  01:28  01:30  01:31  01:33  01:35  01:37  01:38  01:40  01:42  01:43  01:45  01:50  01:52  01:54  01:55  01:57  02:00  02:02  02:04  02:06  02:08  02:10  02:11  02:13  02:15  02:17  02:18  02:20  02:22  02:24  02:26  02:28  02:30  02:32  02:34  02:35  02:37  02:39  02:41  02:43  02:45  02:46  02:47  02:50  02:51  02:53  02:54  02:56  02:58  03:02  03:05  03:07  03:10  03:11  03:13  03:15  03:16  03:18  03:28  03:35  03:37  03:39  03:41  03:43  03:45  03:47  03:48  03:50  03:51  03:53  03:54  03:56  03:58  04:00  04:02  04:04  04:05  04:06  04:11  04:13  04:15  04:17  04:19  04:21  04:22  04:23  04:25  04:27  04:28  04:30  04:32  04:34  04:36  04:37  04:39  04:40  04:43  04:44  04:46  04:48  04:49  04:51  04:53  04:54  04:56  04:58  05:00  05:02  05:03  05:05  05:07  05:10  05:11  05:13  05:14  05:15  05:17  05:20  05:21  05:24  05:27  05:28  05:30  05:31  05:33  05:35  05:36  05:38  05:40  05:41  05:43  05:43  05:46  05:48  05:50  05:52  05:53  05:56  05:58  06:00  06:01  06:03  06:05  06:06  06:11  06:13  06:16  06:18  06:20  06:22  06:24  06:27  06:29  06:31  06:32  06:35  06:36  06:38  06:43  06:45  06:47  06:48  06:50  06:51  06:53  06:55  06:57  06:59  07:01  07:02  07:04  07:06  07:08  07:10  07:12  07:15  07:17  07:19  07:21  07:22  07:25  07:26  07:29  07:31  07:33  07:34  07:36  07:37  07:39  07:42  07:44  07:47  07:47  07:50  07:51  07:53  07:54  07:56  07:58  08:01  08:02  08:04  08:09  08:11  08:13  08:14  08:16  08:19  08:22  08:24  08:26  08:28  08:29  08:31  08:33  08:35  08:37  08:38  08:40  08:42  08:44  08:46  08:47  08:50  08:51  08:53  08:55  08:57  08:59  09:00  09:03  09:04  09:06  09:08  09:10  09:12  09:13  09:16  09:17  09:19  09:21  09:23  09:25  09:26  09:39  09:43  09:46  09:48  09:51  09:52  09:53  09:56  09:58  10:01  10:03  10:05  10:06  10:08  10:11  10:13  10:15  10:18  10:20  10:22  10:23  10:26  10:27  10:29  10:31  10:32  10:34  10:36  10:38  10:40  10:42  10:43  10:45  10:48  10:51  10:53  10:55  10:57  10:59  11:00  11:03  11:05  11:06  11:09  11:11  11:14  11:15  11:19  11:22  11:23  11:26  11:27  11:29  11:31  11:35  11:37  11:39  11:42  11:44  11:45  11:47  11:49  11:51  11:54  11:55  11:57  11:58  12:08  12:18  12:34  12:40 | The maya: a civilization both mysterious  and wonderful.  They left behind incredible pyramids,  artwork, and writings.  Their civilization flourished in the  steamy jungles of southern Mexico and  Central America for centuries.  Then, suddenly they seemed to vanish.  Their great cities were abandoned and  left to decay.  The reason why is still not fully known.  But the maya didn't actually vanish.  They are still here, living in the lands  where their forefathers dwelt.  These are not the warriors depicted in  maya glyphs and monuments,  but the common folks: the farmers and the  peasants.  They have been victims to the cruelties  of conquest and subjugation through the  centuries,  yet they have lived on. Ancient people  now living in a modern world.  The highlands of Chiapas are a magical  place unlike any other on this earth  it's here that the remnants of an  ancient civilization and people still  survive  they call it which means true men  and women within the vertex valleys and  atop the soaring slopes of these  mountains people continue to live the  way they have for thousands of years  their culture is influenced by a mix of  ancient tradition and Spanish conquest  tinted with modern ideologies the  societies of los altos are complex and  each region in town maintains a distinct  identity  the people are one with their land it is  the mother of their sustenance  and to this end they will fight like  their ancestors of old to preserve it  the extreme poverty of the region  dictates a subsistence life of daily  struggle  yet at its heart los altos is a place of  peace and exceptional beauty  a place where the land and its  protectors live in harmony amidst the  clouds  los altos is not a tourist destination  but you may have the opportunity to pass  through it on your way to other  destinations such as tony na  el shiflon or corralitos among others  los altos is special for a number of  reasons not the least of which is that  the modern day ancestors of the maya  people still live here this is a video  i've wanted to make for a long time  because it's about a people and place  that mean a lot to our family  while we were in chiapas we had the  opportunity to visit los altos almost  every week of our time there  and we made some very dear friends i  will say that this video  is a hard one to make for a number of  reasons one of which is that the people  of los altos are extremely reserved for  reasons i'll talk about later  my ability to make this video was also  cut short due to the coronavirus  pandemic  i've done my best to present this video  and the information i'm sharing with you  with as much respect and dignity towards  the indigenous peoples as i can  all of the facts and things that i'll be  sharing with you are from my direct  observation and talking with the  indigenous peoples directly  i hope this video is interesting  bringing insight into the culture and  heritage  of the people of this region welcome to  los altos  [Music]  they speak three primary mayan languages  in los altos  and celtal the latter two being spoken  by the majority  these languages have similarities but  are not the same and even within the  same language there are regional  dialects and differences  this is what solzil sounds like  and here is celta  both these languages are almost  exclusively spoken and although they can  be written the literacy rate in los  altos is extremely low  many people cannot read or write at all  in schools in los altos spanish is  taught  and most teachers do not speak native  languages  this has caused some worry amongst the  people that these indigenous languages  are in danger of being lost  as new generations only speak their  native tongue and learn to read and  write exclusively in spanish  the truth however is that currently  there are still very large populations  of speakers  many of whom speak no spanish at all  the los saltos region does not have  formal government but is divided into  municipios each with a president  in each town local men meet together  about important topics and events and  make decisions for the good of the  pueblo  there is no state or federal police  presence and laws and town boundaries  are  enforced by the people this can  admittedly get ugly at times  especially when disputes concern land or  grievances with the state and federal  governments  towns that border one another sometimes  fight and invariably  people die when we were there we once  heard of a man having tires thrown  around him and being burned  because one village thought he was a spy  from a disputing town  as crazy and scary as this sounds you  have to understand where these people  are coming from  the indigenous people of mesoamerica  have a history of being persecuted and  driven from their lands  the spanish conquest of mexico was a  time of much fear and bloodshed for the  indigenous peoples  in the los altos region several wars  were fought that were extremely violent  the tradition of the indigenous  inhabitants especially in the area of  chamula  is that the region is the belly button  of the earth a privileged and special  place with relationship to the sun  the further from the sacred spot one  goes the more chaotic the world becomes  with demons and wild beasts these  ancient traditions continue to feed the  sentiments of many of the indigenous  peoples  they are deeply tied to their land from  which they get their sustenance  for this reason the people are very  suspicious of foreigners and also often  very shy  they do not like having their photos  taken and there are still those that  believe  cameras steal part of your soul although  the introduction of technology has  dispelled many archaic ideas  some people still believe in witchcraft  and sorcery  the idea of brujos or sorcerers and  curanderos or medicine men  are still definitely a part of the  culture of los altos  you can see some of these traditions and  beliefs in practice in the town of san  juan chamola  in the city's principal church  the poverty in los altos is extreme and  the highest in all of mexico  people make on average 35 a month to  support their families  most people survive through subsistence  farming with crops of corn  soybeans chayotes calabasas and fruits  in warmer areas  there are many flocks of sheep sometimes  goats and pigs  and very seldom cows chickens are also  quite common  weaving in handicrafts are also a large  part of some family's income  perhaps what los altos is best known for  is it's being a hot seat of the  zapatista  movement the zapatistas are a guerrilla  militant group  protesting government involvement in the  affairs of the indigenous peoples  their history is complex and a whole  video could be dedicated to it  this video isn't meant to dive into so  complex a topic  but let me give my personal observations  on the zapatistas  as you travel through los altos there  are no shortages of reminders that many  of the people identify with and share  the ideologies of the zapatista cause  signs are posted and painted in nearly  every pueblo through the mountains  reminding pastors by of the conflicts  and injustices  the indigenous people feel however there  have been no major conflicts in the  region since the year 1994.  although the zapatista's declaration of  war on the mexican government has never  been withdrawn  protests since the 90s have been  peaceful  in 2012 a peaceful demonstration brought  over 40,000 supporters out to march  in many cities of chiapas it was  alarming to some to see how quickly they  assembled  and later disappeared the truth of the  matter is  that most indigenous peoples of the  region would take up the sapathista  cause if they believed it would protect  their livelihood and lands  the sentiment of injustice persists not  necessarily because the people of los  altos are continually wronged  but because of deep cultural identity  the people of los altos are amazing and  incredibly resourceful  the things that they can make with their  hands are nothing short of amazing  from beautiful bags and bolts of cloth  to even something so fine as a necktie  women weave intricate clothes and bolts  of cloth on traditional backstrap looms  which are brought to places such as san  cristobal to sell  when only need visit the plaza downtown  or the artisan market  to see and buy these wares in a few  parts of los altos  primitive factories are being  constructed to produce goods faster  though there's still much manual labor  involved and the results are definitely  handmade  the people here find joy in the simple  things of life a meal of beans shared  around a fire  music and dance or giving a gift they  are some of the most wonderful and  special people we have ever met  despite the conflict and poverty which  they have so often suffered the people  of los altos are generally happy  i spent many hours driving through their  small pueblos watching the men and women  carry bundles of firewood or tending  their flocks of sheep  they have so very little but what they  do have they use well  and are grateful for they are survivors  in the deepest sense  and it is their strong wills and fierce  love of the land that have lasted them  through thick and thin  like their maya ancestors of old these  modern day maya  are warriors at heart  [Music]  so i'll never forget our last day in los  altos before we had to leave  mexico due to the coronavirus pandemic i  want to share something that i wrote  down in my journal  from that experience it's something very  personal to me but i want to share it  because i think it perfectly reflects  the feeling i have towards los altos and  its people  i drove up into the mountains that  morning with an indigenous friend  i'll call my friend pedro he was an  elderly sotzil man with dark tough skin  and deep set wrinkles carved in his  features his face spoke of long  hours in the sun of a life of hardship  and toil  he was strong though and always carried  a woven wool bag as many of his people  do  he only stood up to my shoulder in  height yet i regarded him in every way  as  my senior we drove that morning up a  back road through the villages and  winding mountains of los altos  watching the people wake to their daily  chores under the bright sunshine and  blue skies  we drove far up into the mountains above  chenalo talking about los altos  and the cares and worries of the people  pedro told me how worried he was for the  loss of their culture and language  he spoke about the new generations who  were leaving los altos to go to the big  cities  and how old customs were fading  we parked at the top of a mountain and  walked through the corn and coffee  fields overlooking the valleys below  i thought how strange we must have  looked me a blue-eyed white american  who probably made more at an hour of  work than my friend made in a month  and pedro with his hand-woven bag dark  maya complexion  and a few teeth poor and simple in every  way  we sat there that morning in los altos  at the top of that mountain  and we were exactly the same  though outsiders may have viewed us as  an odd friendship  we looked over the land and were united  in our love for its people and its  beauty  we talked about pedro's hopes and dreams  for his people  we talked about the problems they faced  past and future  and as we turned our eyes from the  beautiful vistas we both expressed our  love  for this incredible place called los  altos  are we there yet  [Music]  you |

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00:03

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00:04

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00:06

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where their forefathers dwelt

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they have been victims to the cruelties

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of conquest and subjugation through the

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yet they have lived on ancient people

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01:01

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atop the soaring slopes of these

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mountains people continue to live the

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their culture is influenced by a mix of

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societies of los altos are complex and

01:23

each region in town maintains a distinct

01:25

identity

01:26

the people are one with their land it is

01:28

the mother of their sustenance

01:30

and to this end they will fight like

01:31

their ancestors of old to preserve it

01:33

the extreme poverty of the region

01:35

dictates a subsistence life of daily

01:37

struggle

01:38

yet at its heart los altos is a place of

01:40

peace and exceptional beauty

01:42

a place where the land and its

01:43

protectors live in harmony amidst the

01:45

clouds

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los altos is not a tourist destination

01:52

but you may have the opportunity to pass

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through it on your way to other

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destinations such as tony na

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el shiflon or corralitos among others

02:00

los altos is special for a number of

02:02

reasons not the least of which is that

02:04

the modern day ancestors of the maya

02:06

people still live here this is a video

02:08

i've wanted to make for a long time

02:10

because it's about a people and place

02:11

that mean a lot to our family

02:13

while we were in chiapas we had the

02:15

opportunity to visit los altos almost

02:17

every week of our time there

02:18

and we made some very dear friends i

02:20

will say that this video

02:22

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02:24

reasons one of which is that the people

02:26

of los altos are extremely reserved for

02:28

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with as much respect and dignity towards

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all of the facts and things that i'll be

02:45

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02:46

observation and talking with the

02:47

indigenous peoples directly

02:50

i hope this video is interesting

02:51

bringing insight into the culture and

02:53

heritage

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of the people of this region welcome to

02:56

los altos

02:58

[Music]

03:02

they speak three primary mayan languages

03:05

in los altos

03:07

and celtal the latter two being spoken

03:10

by the majority

03:11

these languages have similarities but

03:13

are not the same and even within the

03:15

same language there are regional

03:16

dialects and differences

03:18

this is what solzil sounds like

03:28

and here is celta

03:35

both these languages are almost

03:37

exclusively spoken and although they can

03:39

be written the literacy rate in los

03:41

altos is extremely low

03:43

many people cannot read or write at all

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in schools in los altos spanish is

03:47

taught

03:48

and most teachers do not speak native

03:50

languages

03:51

this has caused some worry amongst the

03:53

people that these indigenous languages

03:54

are in danger of being lost

03:56

as new generations only speak their

03:58

native tongue and learn to read and

04:00

write exclusively in spanish

04:02

the truth however is that currently

04:04

there are still very large populations

04:05

of speakers

04:06

many of whom speak no spanish at all

04:11

the los saltos region does not have

04:13

formal government but is divided into

04:15

municipios each with a president

04:17

in each town local men meet together

04:19

about important topics and events and

04:21

make decisions for the good of the

04:22

pueblo

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there is no state or federal police

04:25

presence and laws and town boundaries

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are

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enforced by the people this can

04:30

admittedly get ugly at times

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especially when disputes concern land or

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grievances with the state and federal

04:36

governments

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towns that border one another sometimes

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fight and invariably

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people die when we were there we once

04:43

heard of a man having tires thrown

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around him and being burned

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because one village thought he was a spy

04:48

from a disputing town

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as crazy and scary as this sounds you

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have to understand where these people

04:53

are coming from

04:54

the indigenous people of mesoamerica

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have a history of being persecuted and

04:58

driven from their lands

05:00

the spanish conquest of mexico was a

05:02

time of much fear and bloodshed for the

05:03

indigenous peoples

05:05

in the los altos region several wars

05:07

were fought that were extremely violent

05:10

the tradition of the indigenous

05:11

inhabitants especially in the area of

05:13

chamula

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is that the region is the belly button

05:15

of the earth a privileged and special

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place with relationship to the sun

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the further from the sacred spot one

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goes the more chaotic the world becomes

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with demons and wild beasts these

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ancient traditions continue to feed the

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sentiments of many of the indigenous

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peoples

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they are deeply tied to their land from

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which they get their sustenance

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for this reason the people are very

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suspicious of foreigners and also often

05:38

very shy

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they do not like having their photos

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taken and there are still those that

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believe

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cameras steal part of your soul although

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the introduction of technology has

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dispelled many archaic ideas

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some people still believe in witchcraft

05:52

and sorcery

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the idea of brujos or sorcerers and

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curanderos or medicine men

05:58

are still definitely a part of the

06:00

culture of los altos

06:01

you can see some of these traditions and

06:03

beliefs in practice in the town of san

06:05

juan chamola

06:06

in the city's principal church

06:11

the poverty in los altos is extreme and

06:13

the highest in all of mexico

06:16

people make on average 35 a month to

06:18

support their families

06:20

most people survive through subsistence

06:22

farming with crops of corn

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soybeans chayotes calabasas and fruits

06:27

in warmer areas

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there are many flocks of sheep sometimes

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goats and pigs

06:32

and very seldom cows chickens are also

06:35

quite common

06:36

weaving in handicrafts are also a large

06:38

part of some family's income

06:43

perhaps what los altos is best known for

06:45

is it's being a hot seat of the

06:47

zapatista

06:48

movement the zapatistas are a guerrilla

06:50

militant group

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protesting government involvement in the

06:53

affairs of the indigenous peoples

06:55

their history is complex and a whole

06:57

video could be dedicated to it

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this video isn't meant to dive into so

07:01

complex a topic

07:02

but let me give my personal observations

07:04

on the zapatistas

07:06

as you travel through los altos there

07:08

are no shortages of reminders that many

07:10

of the people identify with and share

07:12

the ideologies of the zapatista cause

07:15

signs are posted and painted in nearly

07:17

every pueblo through the mountains

07:19

reminding pastors by of the conflicts

07:21

and injustices

07:22

the indigenous people feel however there

07:25

have been no major conflicts in the

07:26

region since the year 1994.

07:29

although the zapatista's declaration of

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war on the mexican government has never

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been withdrawn

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protests since the 90s have been

07:36

peaceful

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in 2012 a peaceful demonstration brought

07:39

over 40 000 supporters out to march

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in many cities of chiapas it was

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women weave intricate clothes and bolts

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of cloth on traditional backstrap looms

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the people here find joy in the simple

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things of life a meal of beans shared

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around a fire

08:51

music and dance or giving a gift they

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are some of the most wonderful and

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special people we have ever met

08:57

despite the conflict and poverty which

08:59

they have so often suffered the people

09:00

of los altos are generally happy

09:03

i spent many hours driving through their

09:04

small pueblos watching the men and women

09:06

carry bundles of firewood or tending

09:08

their flocks of sheep

09:10

they have so very little but what they

09:12

do have they use well

09:13

and are grateful for they are survivors

09:16

in the deepest sense

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and it is their strong wills and fierce

09:19

love of the land that have lasted them

09:21

through thick and thin

09:23

like their maya ancestors of old these

09:25

modern day maya

09:26

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09:39

[Music]

09:43

so i'll never forget our last day in los

09:46

altos before we had to leave

09:48

mexico due to the coronavirus pandemic i

09:51

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features his face spoke of long

10:18

hours in the sun of a life of hardship

10:20

and toil

10:22

he was strong though and always carried

10:23

a woven wool bag as many of his people

10:26

do

10:27

he only stood up to my shoulder in

10:29

height yet i regarded him in every way

10:31

as

10:32

my senior we drove that morning up a

10:34

back road through the villages and

10:36

winding mountains of los altos

10:38

watching the people wake to their daily

10:40

chores under the bright sunshine and

10:42

blue skies

10:43

we drove far up into the mountains above

10:45

chenalo talking about los altos

10:48

and the cares and worries of the people

10:51

pedro told me how worried he was for the

10:53

loss of their culture and language

10:55

he spoke about the new generations who

10:57

were leaving los altos to go to the big

10:59

cities

11:00

and how old customs were fading

11:03

we parked at the top of a mountain and

11:05

walked through the corn and coffee

11:06

fields overlooking the valleys below

11:09

i thought how strange we must have

11:11

looked me a blue-eyed white american

11:14

who probably made more at an hour of

11:15

work than my friend made in a month

11:19

and pedro with his hand-woven bag dark

11:22

maya complexion

11:23

and a few teeth poor and simple in every

11:26

way

11:27

we sat there that morning in los altos

11:29

at the top of that mountain

11:31

and we were exactly the same

11:35

though outsiders may have viewed us as

11:37

an odd friendship

11:39

we looked over the land and were united

11:42

in our love for its people and its

11:44

beauty

11:45

we talked about pedro's hopes and dreams

11:47

for his people

11:49

we talked about the problems they faced

11:51

past and future

11:54

and as we turned our eyes from the

11:55

beautiful vistas we both expressed our

11:57

love

11:58

for this incredible place called los

12:08

altos

12:18

are we there yet

12:34

[Music]

12:40

you

English (auto-generated)

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