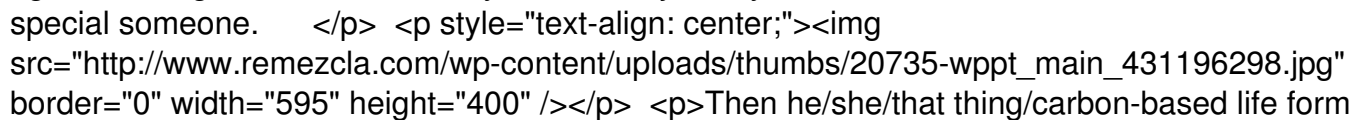


Remember that girl or boy or he/she you were going out with? He/she/it ruled your world, right? Nothing else mattered, not your terrible job or your bleak future, all that mattered was that special someone.



Then he/she/that thing/carbon-based life form dumped your hapless ass and now you're here reading this. But, fear not, there were couples that really were the center of their worlds, just not in the way you'd think. We're talking about the couples that changed or at least made a lasting impact on Latin American history. Their hookups made Latin America into what it is today.

The criterion for this naturally excludes the vast majority of couples. That means your creepy uncle's escapades with the local Laundromat attendant doesn't count.

I. FERDINAND AND ISABELLA

These two were so enamored of each other that they ruled jointly.

Ferdinand and Isabella married in 1469 in order to unify Castile and Aragon. The union was so productive that the newly christened Espana was able to finally banish the Moors from Granada.

These two were made for each other. Both were Catholic and both fell madly in love over their mutual hatred of Muslims and Jews.

It was a fairy tale marriage. The two had great respect for each other and ruled as a duo. We could just imagine them arguing over who gets to order the latest pogrom in between pillow talk. Their marriage was truly magical, just not for anybody not male and Catholic and a Spaniard.

The union helped concentrate power as well as provide a secure base to launch an empire. The Reconquista was already well under way, but the marriage sped up the process. Their grandson later went on to rule the Holy Roman Empire (present day Germany and parts of Central Europe).

Then again, the Spanish Inquisition killed a lot of people and well, you know what happened with Latin America.

II. HERNAN

CORTES AND LA MALINCHE

These two are either the creators of modern Mexico or a bad memory, depending on your politics. As everybody knows, Hernan Cortes landed in 1519 and proceeded to march toward the interior. Cortes then bumped into La Malinche along the way and probably wooed her with real steamy stuff like "Stop crying, you're waking up the neighbors!"

One must wonder how Cortes did not pass the love bug (i.e. smallpox) to La Malinche. At a time when thousands of indigenous people were dropping dead due to contact with smelly Spaniards, La Malinche curiously did not catch it.

Anyway, the two by all accounts thought highly of each other. La Malinche accompanied Cortes wherever he went and even warned him of a sneak attack in Cholula. She had a more far-reaching legacy: she was the mother of one of the first, if not the first, mestizos in Mexico.

As for La Malinche, any definitive account of her later years is lost to history, but some theorize she died in Spain as a noblewoman.

III. EVA AND JUAN PERON

Sure, everybody knows who these two are. They met in 1944 during a fundraiser after an earthquake in San Juan (not that San Juan). As fate and movie convention would have it, they fell in love and shortly moved in together. By 1946, the two were the first couple of the country, due in large part to Evita's tireless campaigning.

Juan Peron realized Evita's charisma and took full advantage of this. Evita became the de facto face of the Argentine government. Juan Peron continued to rule for a couple of years after Evita's death (her husband was so enamored of her that her corpse was embalmed and put on display), but his days were numbered. In 1955, he was exiled.

Evita was the first Argentine woman who commanded attention as a serious player in national politics. The military was less than enthused and grumbled when she announced a run for vice president. The flip

side was that she helped prop up a government which was anti liberalism.</p> <p>Evita's legacy continues. Current president Cristina Kirchner has invoked her memory and owes at least part of her political ideology to Peronism.</p>

<p>\_\_\_\_\_</p> <p>IV. THE SOMOZA

AND DEBAYLE FAMILIES</p> <p>Nicaragua had the bad luck of being ruled by a bunch of douchebags for much of its existence. This political union only concentrated the a-holes into one super jerk dynasty. In 1919, Anastasio Somoza Garcia married Salvadora Debayle, a member of one of the wealthiest families in the country.</p> <p>The union was one of love. Somoza's parents took a dim view to their daughter in-law. That's like having a king looking down on someone because they only have 10 cars. Anyway, Debayle proved to be influential with her husband, just not when it came to butchering thousands during the war with Sandino.</p> <p>Their legacy lived on, unfortunately with their two sons. After decades of misrule and authoritarianism, the dynasty was toppled by a revolution in 1979. The youngest, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, was assassinated in Paraguay the following year. Interestingly enough, Salvadora Debayle survived them and died in 1987 in Washington D.C. A country was destroyed by civil war and it could be traced partly to love.</p>

<p>\_\_\_\_\_</p> <p>V. DIEGO RIVERA

AND FRIDA KAHLO</p> <p>While decidedly un-photogenic, the two were made for each other. Both were left leaning, both were intrinsically weird, and both were chronically unfaithful. Oh, yeah, both could sketch a mean doodle.</p> <p>Anyway, the two met when Frida was still an aspiring painter. Rivera encouraged her ambitions and by 1929, they married. Rivera was a great influence on Frida's early work and both artists were influenced by the aftermath of the Revolution. Suddenly and finally, it was cool to be brown and down and not white and right. In other words, the national consciousness of the revolution seeped into their lives and their works stand as striking examples of appreciation for Mexico's indigenous peoples.</p> <p>Anyway, back to the sordid stuff. Despite the fact that Frida was in constant physical pain from a previous accident, she was no slouch in the booty call department. Her husband was also weak for the opposite sex but Frida one-upped him by cheating with men AND women. A hard-working lady by any definition.</p> <p>♦</p>