

Volkswagen Beetle Still Popular in a Mexico City Neighborhood

今回は、メキシコで親しまれているフォルクスワーゲン（VW）のクラシックカー「ビートル」の話題です。英語では「Bugs」とも呼ばれるこの車、メキシコでは一時期タクシーとしても利用されていたとか。本文には、**put through**（卒業させる）**keep afloat**（破綻しないようにする）**carry on**（続ける）といった、ちょっと意外で面白い意味を持つ句動詞も登場します。ぜひ覚えてレッスンで使ってみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

German automaker Volkswagen (VW) ended production of its Beetle model in 2019. But some communities around the world are still demonstrating a lasting love for this famous vehicle.

One such area is Cuautepec, a neighborhood outside of Mexico City. There are so many VW Beetles in the area that some local people even nicknamed the neighborhood “Vocholandia.” In Mexico, the VW Beetle has long been known as the “vocho.” So, the term Vocholandia means “Beetle land.”

The vehicle has a long history in the Mexican capital. At one time, VW Beetles were commonly used as taxis throughout the city. But today, the northern neighborhood of Cuautepec is the place to go to see the most Beetles, which are also called “Bugs” in English.

Janette Navarro is the owner of a 1996 Beetle. Navarro lives in the neighborhood. She told the Associated Press (AP) one reason the cars are so popular is because the community is hilly, and the Beetle's back-positioned engine provides added power.

"No other car gets up here," Navarro said. "Just the vocho." She drives her VW as a taxi. Navarro added that she started the job eight years ago to support her three children. The job helped her **put** them **through** school.

"When they ask me what I do for work, I say proudly that I'm a vochera (a vocho driver)," Navarro said. "This work **keeps** me **afloat**...It's my adoration, my love."

The first Beetle was introduced in Germany in 1938 when the Nazi party controlled the country. The first vehicle was developed by Austrian-born automotive engineer Ferdinand Porsche. The Beetle grew to become very popular in the United States and in other countries. It was long known as "the people's car."

Beetles were manufactured in Mexico, but production on older models ended in 2003. A newer model was produced after that, but VW stopped all manufacturing of the vehicles in 2019.

While some older cars in the community show their age, others still appear to be in good shape.

One driver named his bright blue Beetle "Gualupita" after his wife, Guadalupe, and added personal designs. Another Beetle seen rolling down the street was painted pink and white, with the front headlights made to look like cat eyes.

People who repair the vehicles told the AP it seems like the number of vochos is **dropping off** in Mexico City. Repairman David Enojosa said his family's shop used to specialize mainly in Beetle parts. But since VW halted production five years ago, they are no longer as easy to get.

Enojosa predicted that if **shortages** continue, the area's Beetles could "disappear in two or three years." He added, "Before we had too many parts for vochos, now there aren't enough."

One of Enojosa's customers told the AP he plans to keep looking for parts to keep his Beetle running as long as possible. The customer, Jesús Becerra, says he would love to keep seeing many cars in the neighborhood for many years.

"You adapt them, you find a way to make it keep running," he told the AP.

Joaquín Pérez is the 18-year-old owner of a white, 1991 VW Beetle. He said he is **carrying on** a family tradition by continuing to drive the car as a taxi. His father was a taxi driver who also drove a Beetle.

Pérez noted that his father taught him everything he knows about the job and the vehicles. "This area, always, always since I can remember has been a place of vochos," Pérez said. He added, "This here is the car of the people."

I'm Bryan Lynn.

The Associated Press reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.

Source: Volkswagen Beetle Still Popular in a Mexico City Neighborhood

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. put (someone) through (v.) to pay for school

I put myself through college by working part-time all year.

2. keep (someone/something) afloat (v.) to preserve or keep (something) existing

For five years, we saved everything just to keep our business afloat.

3. drop off (v.) to decrease

The number of influenza cases usually drops off at the beginning of spring.

4. shortage (n.) not having enough of something

The lack of rain last year and this year caused a water shortage.

5. carry on (v.) to continue doing something (usually a tradition)

Kari still carries on the family tradition of going to the beach on the first day of summer.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is Vocholandia, and where does the name come from?
2. According to Janette Navarro, why is the VW Beetle still so popular there?
3. Why does repairman David Enojosa think that Beetles may disappear in a couple of years?
4. Are you interested in classic cars? Which models? Why?
5. People in many countries around the world are in love with their cars. Why?