

Oregon *Folklife* Series

Mexican American Folklife in Oregon



THE OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1898



The Folklife Program staff specially thanks the traditional artists and members of Mexican communities throughout Oregon for continuing their valued traditional arts and culture

Also available in the Oregon Folklife Series:

- Chinese Traditions of Oregon
- Lao Traditions of Oregon
- Maritime Folklife in Lincoln County
- Traditional Arts of the Oregon Country

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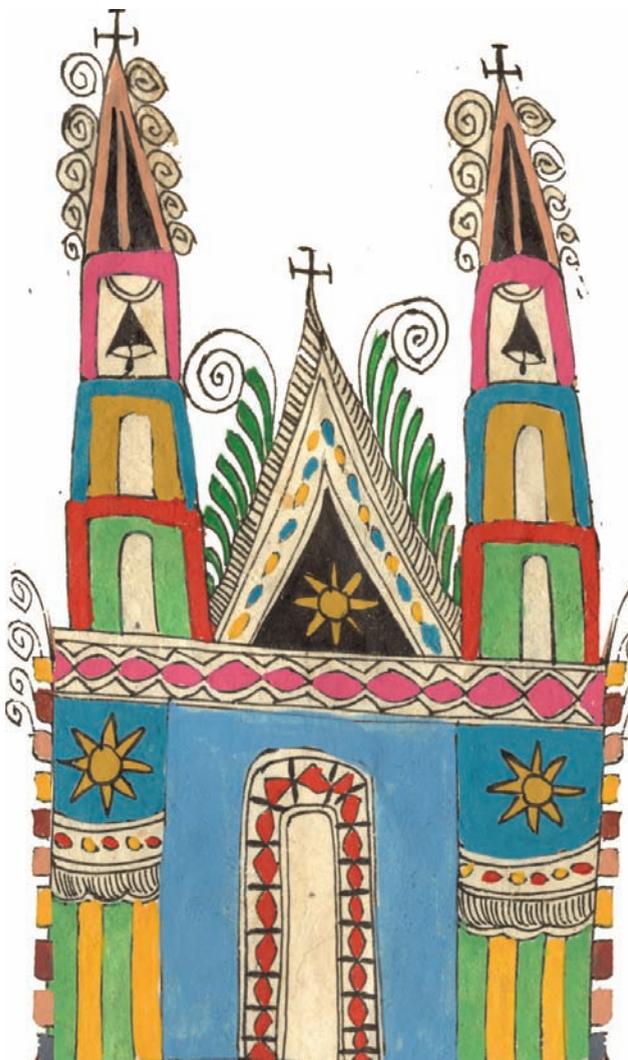
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The Mexican Presence in Oregon

The Mexican presence in Oregon dates to the 1600s with the early Spanish explorers who left place names on such sites as Cape Blanco and Cape Sebastian. Oregon is now home to a growing number of residents of Mexican heritage with common characteristics but also distinctive traits and cultural differences.

An **ethnic group** is a group of people who come from, or whose ancestors come from, the same country or culture. Oregon's Mexican ethnic group includes people who were born in the United States (Mexican Americans) or Mexico (Mexicans).

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, people of Mexican heritage make up 6.3 percent of Oregon's total population. This means that approximately 215,000 persons of Mexican descent were living in Oregon in 2000.

Historically, most Mexican Americans came from northern Mexico, often referred to as *norteños*, or northerners, although



many also came from Texas and California. More recent immigrants have journeyed from many Mexican states, revealing the country's ethnic, or indigenous, and cultural diversity. Although it is impossible to accurately calculate the number of **indigenous** people of Mexican descent living in Oregon, the Mexican Consulate of Oregon confirms that there are **Mixtecos** and **Zapotecos** from **Oaxaca**, **Otomís** from **Hidalgo**, **Purépechas** from **Michoacán** and **Nahuas** from **Hidalgo** and

Veracruz. Many indigenous people speak native languages other than Spanish and maintain distinct regional traditions.

THINK ABOUT THIS!

Last names often tell part of the history of your ancestry.

- Find out the story of your father and mother's last names.
- What country or countries do those names come from? Mark them on a world map.
- What is your ethnic background?
- What languages did your ancestors speak when they came to North America?
- If you are Native American, mark the region(s) from where your ancestors originated. What languages did they speak?

Words to Review	
ethnic group	Hidalgo
indigenous	Purépechas
Mixtecos	Michoacán
Zapotecos	Nahuas
Oaxaca	Veracruz
Otomís	

Flags and Symbols

The tricolor Mexican flag is red, white and green. Colors often reflect a special or symbolic cultural meaning. The color red on the Mexican flag symbolizes the blood shed during the battles for independence. The white symbolizes purity. The green symbolizes the fertility of the earth.

The flag was first introduced in 1821 as a basic tricolor. In 1823 the Mexican coat of arms was added to the white center stripe.



The coat of arms portrays an eagle eating a snake while standing on a *nopal* cactus.

A half circle of green oak (*enciño*) on the left symbolizes strength and the laurel branches on the right symbolize victory.



Mexico's national flag

The image on the coat of arms comes from an ancient Aztec legend in which Huitzilopochtli (a God) told the people that they would find the promised land in a place where the eagle eats a snake on a *nopal* cactus.

After wandering for hundreds of years, the Aztecs found the eagle on a small swampy island in Lake Texcoco. They named this place Tenochtitlan which means "place of the *nopal* cactus." This is now Mexico City, the capital of the country.



Nopal cactus

What's In a Name?

There are many places in Oregon with Spanish names. Harney County has many Mexican place names.

Placidia Butte is located about ten miles west of Riley. It may have been named for Placedor Bravo, a Mexican horse trader living in the area. **Serrano Point** is located between Alvord Desert and Alvord Lake. Serrano is a Spanish word for people from the mountains. Other counties have place names of Mexican or Spanish origin. **Buena Vista** was Oregon's first industrial city and is located on the west bank of the Willamette about six miles southeast of Independence. **Buena Vista** is Spanish for beautiful view or good view.

THINK ABOUT THIS!

- Write what you know about the flag of Mexico.
- What is the story of its Coat of Arms?
- Why are the colors of the flag symbolically important?
- Research the history of other flags such as your state flag and the United States flag.
- What do the colors and symbols on these flags mean?



Background on the Peoples of Mexico

Great indigenous civilizations, including the Aztec, Maya, Toltec, Mixtec, Zapotec and Olmec, flourished in Mexico prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the early 16th Century. The **Mayan** were known for their abstract knowledge, **hieroglyphic writing**, 365-day Mayan calendar, sculpture used in their architecture and accomplishments in art and science.

The **Aztec** developed a civilization based on **Toltec** and **Mixteca-Puebla** heritage and were known for their achievements in engineering, architecture, art, mathematics, astronomy, sculpture, weaving, metalwork, music and picture writing.



Mayan Calendar

By 1521 Spanish conquistadors, under the leadership of **Hernán Cortés**, overthrew the Aztec empire and captured its ruler, **Moctezuma**. Over time, Spanish rule extended to the remainder of Mexico, Central and South America and parts of what is now the United States. In 1821, Mexico declared independence from Spain and established its northern border at the **42nd parallel**, near the present-day Oregon/California border. The early years of the republic were marked with turmoil and strife. The Mexican-American War (1846-48) ended with the annexation of

California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado and Wyoming by the United States. Mexican art, architecture, culture and influence made its imprint on these states and are still evident in places today.

What is Folklife?

Folklife includes all traditions passed on in communities of people who have shared interests, beliefs and values. Folklife is the everyday activities that have been carried on over several generations within groups of people, or folk groups. **Folklife** can include things you create, like a paper airplane or a birthday cake, or it can be something you perform, like singing a song, doing a dance, or telling a story or joke. Folklife can also be something you believe, like how to cure a cold, predict the weather, or avoid bad luck.

These are just a few examples of the many, many kinds of folklife. Your traditions come from your folk group.

Folk Groups

Folk Groups are groups of people who share the same traditions and ways of living. An **ethnic group** is one example of a folk group whose members have the same language, customs and beliefs. Other examples of folk groups are families, clubs, sports teams, students' in a classroom, bands, neighborhood groups and occupational groups. Most people belong to many folk groups.

Words to Review

indigenous civilizations
(Aztec, Maya, Toltec, Mixtec,
Zapotec and Olmec)
hieroglyphic writing
Hernán Cortés
Moctezuma
42nd parallel
folklife
folk groups
tradition
ethnic group

THINK ABOUT THIS!

Which folk groups do you and your family belong to?

- Choose one and name some of the traditions that members of your folk group have in common with each other.
- Describe this group?



Facts About Mexico

Mexico's Official name

United Mexican States

Capital

Mexico City

Estimated 2000 Population

105,146,900

Geographic Coordinates

23 00 N, 102 00 W

Area

1,972,547 square kilometers
(761,605 square miles)

Ethnic groups

60% *mestizo* (mixed European and Indian descent) and 30% *indígena* (Native Americans or Indians - including Nahua, Maya, Zapotecos, Mixtecos, Totonacs and Purépecha) Other ethnic minorities include Caucasian, Blacks and Chinese

Terrain

High, rugged mountains, low coastal plains, high plateaus, desert

States and Federal Districts

31 states (*estados*) and one federal district (*Distrito Federal*) Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila de Zaragoza, Colima, Distrito Federal, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, México, Michoacán de Ocampo, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro de Arteaga, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz-Llave, Yucatán, Zacatecas

Location

Central America and southern North America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the U.S. and bordering the Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the U.S.

Agriculture

Corn, wheat, coffee, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables, tobacco and livestock



Clay pottery from Paztacuaro, Mexico

Dialects

Spanish and over 50 indigenous languages

Industries

Oil, silver, gold, food processing, steel, chemical, textile, tourism, fishing

Flag

Green, white and red tricolor with the coat of arms symbolizing an eagle eating a snake on a *nopal* cactus



Janitzo Fisherman

THINK ABOUT THIS!

- Research facts about your country.
- Make a two column chart. On one side write facts about Mexico and on the other side write facts about your country.
- Compare the facts.
- What things are similar?
- What things are different?
- What conclusions can you draw from your research?



Dagoberto Morales in traditional Purépecha clothing, holding his hand woven statue of the Virgen de la Salud



History

Mexicans in Oregon

In the 1600s Spanish explorers ventured along the Oregon coast. By the 1800s the Pacific Northwest witnessed many more visits by crews of Mexican, Peruvian and Spanish sailors searching for settlement sites along the coast. For years, people moved freely along the open border between the Oregon Country and Mexico, trading supplies and cultural influences. Mining and cattle ranching drew many settlers to the area in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By the early 1870s Mexican *vaqueros*, skilled at horsemanship and cattle herding, had moved north and trained young men working in the region.

Mule Packs and Railroads

Even before the Civil War, Mexican merchants, miners, soldiers, adventurers, shepherders and *vaqueros* were living in southern Oregon. Mexicans are credited with introducing the **mule pack train** to the region. This system

Mule Pack Train (OrHi 93798)



of moving large quantities of goods on mules helped advance transportation on the frontier.

By the 1850s, Mexican mule packers had established routes to the Illinois Valley in southern Oregon and The Dalles, Oregon, as well as to Lewiston, Idaho and Walla Walla, Washington. In the 1860s and 1870s, Mexicans, along with workers from China, Japan and the Philippines, built railroads linking the east and west coasts and eventually making mule pack trains obsolete.

Immigration and Braceros

In 1910, the Mexican Revolution increased immigration to the United States, including Oregon, where fertile land offered work opportunities. During the Great Depression, however, the number of Mexicans in Oregon decreased because jobs disappeared. Later, World War II created a huge labor shortage in the United States as men left to join the armed forces.

The **Bracero Program**, instituted by the U.S. government, helped to relieve the shortage and encouraged thousands of Mexicans to come to work



Braceros in Labor Camp, 1943 (OrHi 98619)

in communities around the state. Between 1942 and 1947, the number of low-wage workers in Oregon increased by 15,134. **Braceros** went wherever there were big labor shortages. These workers were very important in agriculture and helped to maintain the region's railroads. **Braceros'** importance was officially recognized, but their living conditions and treatment were not always what had been promised.



Workers harvest potatoes in Central Oregon, 1943 (OrHi 73286)

According to the Oregon Employment Department publication *Hispanics in Oregon's Workforce, 1998*, Mexicans were often targets of violence and discrimination. To help protect them, some workers were advised to stay on the farms even on their days off. Workers were often



Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Oregon Today

housed in canvas tents, six men to a 16' X 16' space with one cot and one blanket per man. The food was unfamiliar and adequate water was not always available for drinking or personal hygiene.

The **Bracero** Program was first instituted in 1942 and revived in 1951. It helped to create a steady flow of Mexican immigration that continues today.

THINK ABOUT THIS!

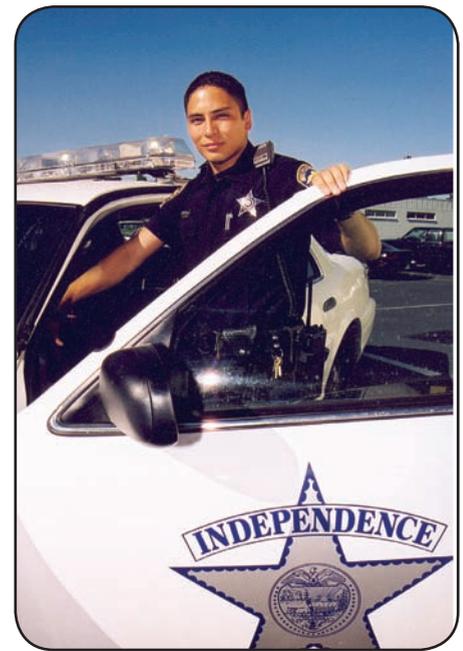
- Using an Oregon map, locate the Illinois Valley and The Dalles.
- Estimate how many miles a day a mule pack train could travel?
- Find out the names of some cowboy gear and horse practices. Do you know the origin of any of these words?
- Contact your local historical society or interview your grandparents to find out about your local history.
- Ask your parents and grandparents to tell you the story of why your family came to Oregon and stops they may have taken along the way.
- Make a drawing of their journey and write a diary of what you imagine they may have experienced or discovered and who they might have met along the way.
- Measure a 16' X 16' space. Divide this space equally among 6 people. Describe what you think your life would be like living in this space.

People often migrate to find a better life and more job opportunities. For generations, Oregon's agriculture, with its vast labor demands, has played a prominent role in attracting immigrants and migrant workers. It is the main reason for the state's dramatic growth in Mexican residents, who come to fill jobs in nurseries, vineyards, farms, forests and food-processing plants. Once established, many people have tended to move from physically demanding jobs in agriculture to ones in service industries, business, education and politics.



Mexican workers in hop field

Immigrants are people who move from one country to live and work in another. The United States is often called a "nation of immigrants." Except for the Native Americans who were here before Columbus made his historic voyage, everyone living in the United States either came from, or their relatives came from, another country. Mexican immigrants are simply another wave of immigration to the United States.



Independence Police Officer, Oscar Zambrano. ©Photo by Paulina Hermosilla

Words to Review

vaqueros mule pack train
Braceros Bracero Program
immigrants



Establishing a Sense of Place

Mexican storefronts, bilingual signs, newspapers, radio and television stations are evidence of the increased presence of Mexicans and Mexican Americans throughout Oregon.



Storefront in Hillboro with signs in English and Spanish

According to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, the number of Latino-owned businesses has increased considerably over the past 10 years.

State, county and community organizations have formed to serve the health, education, family, social and cultural needs of the people. For instance,

Washington County's Centro Cultural offers educational, computer and job training, bilingual information, referrals and other services.

Catholic Charities administers El Programa Hispano in Portland and Gresham with counseling, outreach, language classes and student retention programs. Youth on the Move in Nyssa, AYALA Foundation in Medford, Programa de Ayuda in Newport and Bend, Club Latino Americano in Hermiston and LEARN in Woodburn provide similar programs. These organizations often function as cultural centers for the communities as well.

In 1981 El Hispanic News published its first issue under Clara Padilla Andrews' ownership. It received awards



El Hispanic News, March 4, 1998

in 1998 and 1999 as the number one bilingual weekly by the National Association of Hispanic Publishers.

Sister Cities: Portland, Oregon and Guadalajara, Mexico

President Dwight D. Eisenhower introduced the U.S. Sister City Program in 1956 calling it the "people-to-people program." This program was founded with the goal of linking cities sharing similarities such as population, industry or art together to form partnerships and create an international atmosphere of understanding and respect.

The Portland-Guadalajara Sister City Association formed in 1983, to promote a deeper understanding of Mexico's culture and heritage through education and cross-cultural exchanges.

Salvador's Bakery in downtown Woodburn



Establishing a Sense of Place continued



Yesenia's Mexican Market and Bakery in southeast Portland

Shelves
stocked with
Mexican food
products



Yesenia's Market

Yesenia's Mexican Market and Bakery in southeast Portland, like other *mercados* around the state, sells essential ingredients to make traditional Mexican foods.

The shelves are stocked with freshly baked Mexican breads, *cojita* cheese, *nopal* cactus, hot sauces, spices and fresh peppers of many sizes, tastes, and colors. Festive piñatas line the aisles.

Elected Officials

Susan Castillo received a Bachelors of Arts in Communication from Oregon State University. As the first Latina in the Oregon Legislative Assembly, she served in the Oregon State Senate from 1997 to 2002. In 2002 she was elected as Oregon's State Superintendent of Public Instruction.



Serena Cruz learned much from her mother, a Mexican immigrant, who emphasized the importance of education to her family. After high school Serena earned a full scholarship to Lewis and Clark College and graduated with a degree in Political Science. In 1998

Serena was the first Mexican American elected to the Multnomah County Commission, District 2.

Maria Rojo de Steffey was elected as Multnomah County Commissioner in May of 2001. She begins her second term as commissioner January 2005. Maria is the daughter of immigrant parents. Her migrant worker family instilled in her the value of gaining an education. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oregon in 1978 and completed some graduate work at the University of Maryland. She has served on many advisory boards and has a long history of civic involvement. She is Honorary Director of the Portland Guadalajara Sister City Association.



THINK ABOUT THIS!

- Find out if your town or city has a sister city.
- What places have unusual and interesting names in your area?
- Do any places in your area have Spanish or Mexican names?
- What might this suggest about the immigrants to your area and where they came from?
- Are there bilingual signs in your community written in English and Spanish?
- Make a two column chart. Put English words on one side and the corresponding Spanish words on the other side.
- Many English and Spanish words come from the same Latin roots. Do any in your list have the same root?

(see page 22- Language)



Celebrations

Celebrations are communal gatherings that mark important moments in the lives of individuals, families and communities. These cultural events include **rites of passage**, calendar holidays, national celebrations and social gatherings. As in all cultures, traditional arts, rituals, stories, music and dance are expressions of a community's folklife.

Family bonds are very strong in Mexican culture, as many celebrations indicate. The care and raising of children are often shared by the grandparents and an extended family of **padrinos** (godparents) who contribute financially to fiestas in honor of a child's birth, baptism and **cumpleaños** (birthdays).

Young magician performs during Día del Niño event at Centro Cultural in Washington County



Silvia Zurita photographed her quinceañera dress and corona displayed on her bed

Quinceañera, or the fifteenth birthday, is particularly important for teenage girls in Mexican culture because it marks entry into adulthood and signifies new responsibilities. In Oregon, many families plan **quinceañeras** for their daughters that are often as large as weddings. These typically begin with a religious ceremony followed by a **fiesta** where the girl and her chamberlains and maids dress in formal attire.

El Día de los Reyes (Three Kings Day), or Epiphany, January 6, marks the arrival of the three kings to pay homage to the Infant Jesus. Traditionally, children receive gifts and each family eats a special wreath-shaped sweet bread called **rosca de reyes**. Hidden inside the bread is a small figure of the Infant Jesus. Whoever finds the Infant in the bread is responsible for hosting a party on February 2, celebrating **Candelaria** (Candelmas), where **tamales** are served. This is the official end of the Mexican celebration of the Christmas season.



A child dressed in traditional costume for Christmas in Mexico

El Día del Niño,

April 30, recognizes the importance of children in Mexican families and society. Communities across Oregon plan activities that entertain children. Centro Cultural in Cornelius hosts a young magician who captivates the audience with his tricks.

Enero - January

- 1 - Año Nuevo, New Year's Day
- 6 - El Día de los Reyes, Three Kings Day

Febrero - February

- 2 - Día de la Candelaria, Candlemas Day

Abril - April

- 30 - El Día del Niño, Children's Day

Mayo - May

- 5 - Cinco de Mayo, 5th of May
- 10 - El Día de las Madres, Mother's Day

Septiembre - September

- 16 - Dieciséis de Septiembre, Independence Day

Noviembre - November

- 1 - Día de Todos los Santos, All Saints Day
- 2 - El Día de los Muertos, Day of the Dead

Diciembre - December

- 12 - Virgen de Guadalupe, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 16-24 - Las Posadas, nightly ritual of Mary and Joseph looking for lodging
- 25 - Navidad, Christmas Day
- 28 - Día de los Santos Inocentes, Holy Innocents Day

Celebrations continued

Cinco de Mayo, May 5, and **Dieciséis de Septiembre**, September 16, are well-known historical holidays in Mexico.

Cinco de Mayo celebrates General Ignacio Zaragoza's victory over the French at Puebla. Each year the Portland-Guadalajara Sister City Association organizes and produces the annual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta which is held in Portland's Waterfront Park in May. This is a community event that showcases Latino family and cultural

values including music, dance, cuisine, sports and the arts and has evolved into Oregon's largest multicultural activity, with an annual attendance exceeding 300,000. In Eugene, Adelante Sí organizes Fiesta Latina to honor Latin American culture during Cinco de Mayo.

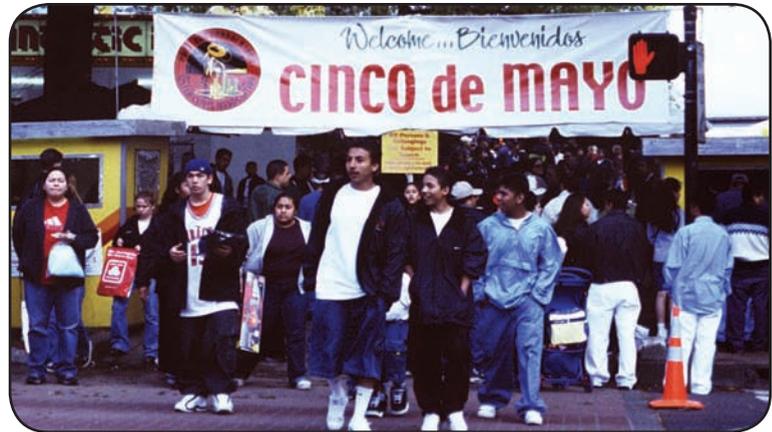
Dieciséis de Septiembre (September 16) is Mexico's Independence Day, commemorating the country's separation from Spain in 1810. Like the fourth of July in the United States, this is Mexico's most important national holiday and Mexican communities throughout Oregon organize picnics, parades, speeches, games and traditional songs and dances.

El Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), November 2, is widely commemorated in Mexico as the symbolic annual return of the spirits of deceased loved ones. Families arrange *ofrendas* (home altars) decorated with photographs of the departed, personal items, images of religious figures, special breads called *pan de muertos*, sugar skulls or *calaveritas de azúcar*, and other items. The tradition of *ofrendas* is kept alive in Oregon by individual families. Because **Día de los Muertos**

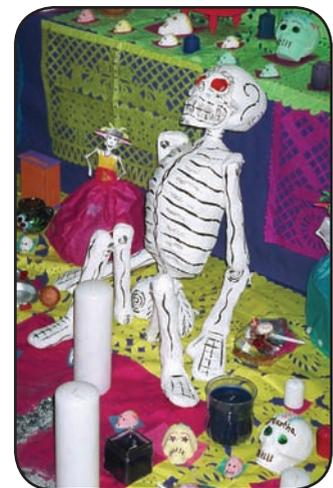
is close to Halloween, it is fast becoming popular with the larger community. In Eugene, artist, community organizer and teacher Armando Morales has been building home altars for the past twenty years with his family and community.



Skull made by Armando Oliveda



Portland's Cinco de Mayo festival



A skeleton decorates a Día de los Muertos altar at the Oregon Historical Society

Words to Review

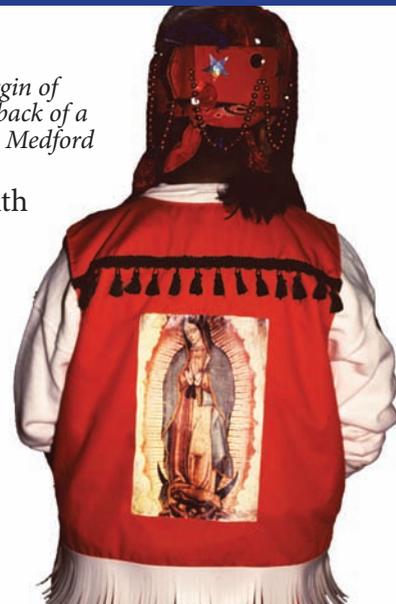
rites-of-passage	rosca de reyes	Cinco de Mayo
padrinos	fiesta	Dieciséis de Septiembre
cumpleaños	Candelaria	El Día del Niño
quinceañera	Las Posadas	El Día de las Madres
ofrenda	pan de muerto	El Día de los Reyes
		El Día de los Muertos

Celebrations continued

Contemporary Mexican culture evolved from the merging of indigenous traditions with those brought by the Spanish and the Catholic Church. These influences are easily identifiable in many Mexican customs.

Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe holiday begins the Mexican Christmas season with a feast on December 12. It commemorates the story of her miraculous appearance in 1531 to Juan Diego outside of Mexico City. The Lady of Guadalupe commands intense devotion by most Mexicans, and her special day is celebrated in Masses, religious parades, dances and songs. She is also honored on May 10, **El Día de las Madres** (Mother's Day), because she is recognized as the mother of all Mexicans.

Image of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the back of a matachin dancer in Medford



A religious image on a home altar

Las Posadas (December 16-24) are folk dramas reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for lodging in anticipation of the birth of Baby Jesus. For nine successive evenings, a cortege of individuals dressed as Mary, Joseph, angels and shepherds goes door to door singing **villancicos** (traditional songs) asking for lodging. Each night, the occupants of the homes sing songs of refusal until the ninth evening when the residents finally invite the procession inside to celebrate the couple's finding a place. Usually, the host family serves traditional **tamales**, **colación** (a mixture of different candies), **buñuelos** (crispy sweet bread in syrup) and hot chocolate, **atole** (a drink made of corn flour, evaporated milk and sugar) or **ponche** (punch made of tea, citrus, tamarind, guava, cinnamon, **tejocotes**, sugarcane, and prunes).

Piñatas were originally made in the shape of a seven-pointed star and made for the Christmas season. Breaking the **piñata** symbolized good conquering evil. Nowadays, however, piñatas come in many shapes and are a favorite at children's birthday parties and other community celebrations. Originally, a clay pot formed the base but contemporary

piñatas are made out of balloons or cardboard strips covered with newspaper, crepe paper and glue. Customarily, children sing a traditional rhyme while breaking a piñata.

Children breaking a piñata during a festival in Hermiston



Dale, dale, dale,
No pierdas el tino,
Porque si lo pierdes,
Pierdes el camino,
Ya le diste uno,
Ya le diste dos,
Ya le diste tres,
Y tu tiempo se acabó



THINK ABOUT THIS!

How does your family celebrate birthdays?

- Are there special things that happen on that day?
- What foods do you eat and who celebrates with you?
- What year's birthday do you look forward to the most? Why?
- Think about other special occasions that your family celebrates and write down all of the things that help make them special.
- List the federal holidays celebrated in the United States and describe the meaning or reason each one is celebrated?
- Does your family celebrate any of these in a special way? Describe how.



Traditional Arts & Crafts

Traditional Mexican arts and crafts are often passed on within a family from mother to daughter, father to son. Woodworking, piñata making, embroidery, crochet, corn husk dolls, pottery and wheatweaving are mastered by generations in a family.

These traditional crafts have changed little over hundreds of years, retaining characteristics that identify the artwork as being from a certain family, village or region in Mexico.

Many traditional arts are now practiced in Oregon by artists such as Antonio Ramos (Woodburn), Cecilia Santiago (Stanfield) and Dagoberto Morales (Medford).

The Ramos Family

Antonio Ramos is from the indigenous Purépecha culture of Michoacán, Mexico. He grew up in the village of Cuanajo near Lake Paztcuaro.

As a boy he spent time after school

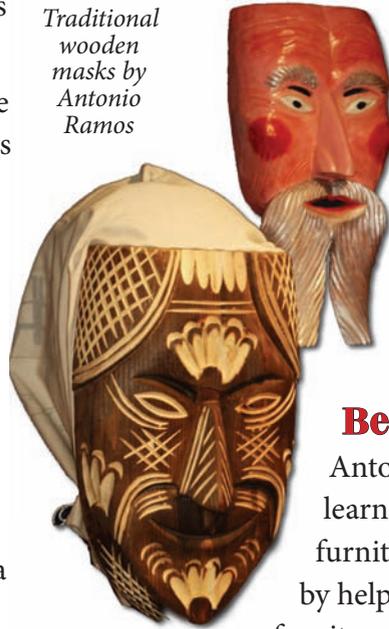
in his family's furniture shop. His father taught him the traditional woodcarving and furniture making style of their region. Antonio and his family keep this and many other traditional activities alive in their home in Woodburn.

Ramos also teaches elementary school and is a community leader.



Antonio Ramos

Traditional wooden masks by Antonio Ramos



Bertrand Ramos is

Antonio's brother. He also began learning to carve wood and make furniture when he was 13 years old by helping his father in the family's furniture shop. This style of carved and

painted furnishings, toys, boxes and decorations

is unique to their village of Cuanajo. Bertrand

was a master artist in the Folklife Program's 2003

Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program. He taught

his nephew Antonio Junior beginning traditional woodworking.



Bertrand Ramos

Leticia Ramos

was also born in Cuanajo, Michoacán and is Purépecha. She

learned to weave and embroider from her mother while growing up in Mexico. She also

knows how to make piñatas and traditional foods such as *pan de muerto*, *pan rancheros*, *tamales*, *empanadas*, *mole* and *pozole*.

As a young woman, she married Antonio and together they teach their children the traditions of their culture.



Leticia Ramos

Words to Review

- mole*
- pozole*
- villancicos*
- tamales*
- colación*
- buñuelos*
- atole*
- ponche*
- tejacotes*
- piñatas*
- empanadas*
- pan rancheros*
- Lady of Guadalupe
- calaveritas de azúcar*



Traditional Arts & Crafts continued

Since the 1960s, **lowriders** have been identified with the culture of young, urban Mexican American men who modify their vehicles to affirm personal and distinctive styles. Car, truck, van and SUV owners exhibit their artistry and Mexican pride through elaborate ornamentation, rich custom interiors, chrome or gold-plated wheels and intricate paint jobs. Custom hydraulic suspensions make it possible for lowriders to move up and down as well as side to side, creating a type of performance. The younger generation of boys has emulated their older brothers, customizing their bicycles into lowriders as seen in the parade for Fiesta Mexicana in Woodburn.



Jessie León with his prize-winning custom lowrider bicycle



Words to Review

Lowriders jaripeos
Charrería charros

Prize-winning lowrider Cadillac



Boys riding their lowrider bikes in the Fiesta Mexicana parade

Traditional Arts & Crafts continued



José Preciado was born and raised on a ranch in Buena Vista, Jalisco. At a young age he learned to make rawhide and horsehair crafts from his family. Today, he continues to tan hides and do leather work using the techniques he learned from his father. In his spare time José braids rawhide and

makes horse gear such as chaps, vests, whips and headstalls. He also trains horses and participates with his nephew, Pedro Muñoz of Mollala, in *jaripeos* (rodeos) in Oregon and Washington. José lives with his family in Canby.



José Preciado with his horse at his Los 3 Potrillos Ranch in Mollala



José Preciado wearing a traditional costume for a charreadas (rodeo)

Charrería traditions developed on ranches as cowboys honed their occupational skills. *Charreadas* or *jaripeos*, Mexican-style rodeos, are very popular in Mexico and now in Oregon. These events, held close to major holidays, have music as a major component. *Charros* (cowboys) participate in roping, bull riding and other equestrian competitions. They take pride in wearing ornate costumes and outfitting their horses with all the trappings.



Chaps made by José Preciado

THINK ABOUT THIS!

- Ask your family if anyone makes traditional crafts such as quilting, basketry, knitting, embroidery, leatherwork, woodcarving or other crafts.
- Ask them how they learned their craft and who taught them.
- Invite folk artists to your class to teach traditional crafts. Think of questions and interview them about their crafts.



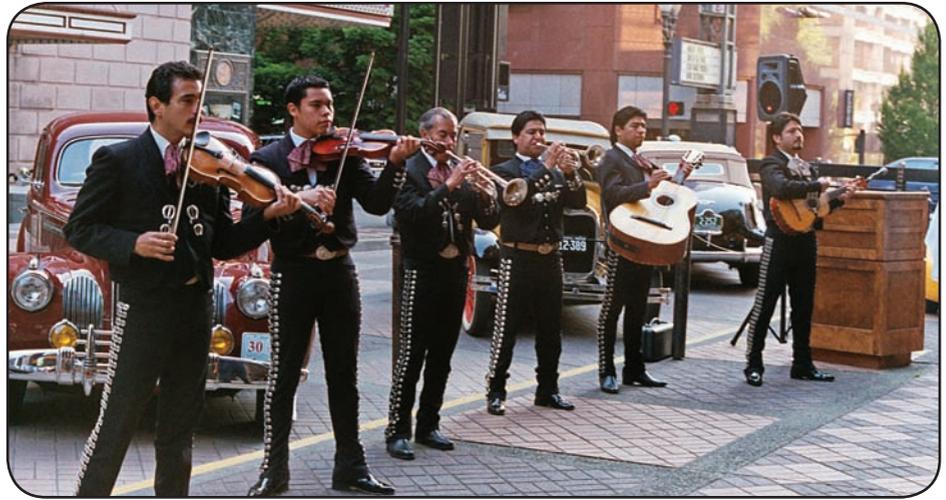
Traditional Music

Music is a vibrant part of daily life and a major element of all community celebrations. Mariachi music is particularly popular because it expresses Mexican pride. *Música norteaña*, music of the northern part of Mexico and south Texas, is a style of country music that features the accordion. *Mariachi* and *norteaño* groups, as well as soloists, duets and trios, sing traditional songs such as *serenatas*, *corridos* and *rancheras*. The *corrido*, a type of ballad, generally tells a story about events that happened in Mexico. New *corridos* are now being sung about life in Oregon.



Words to Review

<i>música norteaña</i>	
<i>mariachi</i>	<i>corridos</i>
<i>rancheras</i>	<i>serenatas</i>
<i>boleros</i>	<i>dueto</i>
<i>ocarinas</i>	<i>genre</i>
<i>vihuelas</i>	<i>sones</i>



Los Palmeros mariachi band playing in downtown Portland

Mariachi Music

Mariachi refers to a **genre** of Mexican music played by musicians who dress in silver studded **charro** outfits with wide brimmed hats. Traditionally, *mariachis* played **sones** (melodies and dances born out of folk traditions) from the various regions of Mexico. Mariachi ensembles play a variety of instruments including violins, guitars, basses, **vihuelas** (five string guitars) and trumpets.

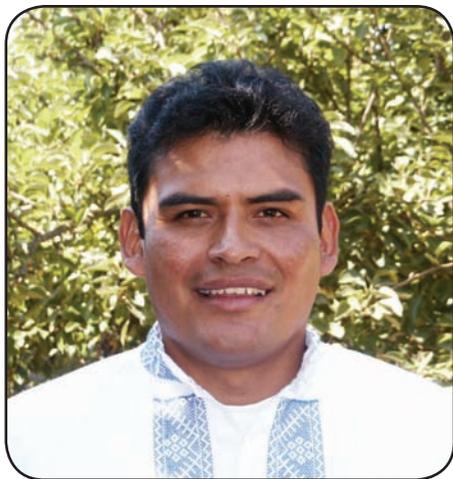
Mariachi songs are about machismo, love, betrayal, death, politics, revolutionary heroes and sometimes animals.

This type of music originated in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Mariachi ensembles are often hired for weddings and celebrations.



Los Palmero mariachi band

Musician Profiles



Hugo Nava

Hugo Nava was born and raised in Tlaxcala, Mexico. During his youth he learned to play guitar and sing the songs of his region. He has been interpreting traditional Mexican and Latin American music for many years. Since 1994 he has specialized in programs for children.

He sings and plays traditional songs in Náhuatl, Purépecha and Spanish.

During his youth, Hugo also learned to make drums, wooden flutes and

clay *ocarinas*. He now lives in Corvallis where he has a collection of traditional musical instruments that he takes to classrooms and community centers to play for others.



Drum, flutes and clay ocarinas made by Hugo Nava

Dueto Estella y Alberto

Estella Lerma was born in Laredo, Texas of Mexican heritage and has lived in Portland since childhood. As a young adult she learned to play guitar and sing songs from her Mexican background. Alberto Gonzales was born in Tepic, Mexico where he grew up singing folk songs and playing the traditional instruments of the region. The duet sings traditional *boleros*, *rancheras*, and folk songs from many regions of Mexico.



Estella Lerma and Alberto Gonzales

THINK ABOUT THIS!

- What are your favorite types of music?
- Do you know any songs that tell a story?
- Does someone in your family play an instrument or sing songs?
- When is music played in your family life?
- Did you learn a lullaby or bedtime song from a family member?
- Do you know any traditional songs that have been passed down from your grandparents?
- Write the words to the song that you have learned in this way.
- Ask your parents or grandparents where they first heard the song and how they learned it.



Traditional Dance

Dance is appreciated and enjoyed at small and large gatherings. Many communities now have children's folklórico groups that perform dances from diverse regions of Mexico. The dances reinforce community values among Mexican American children and teach non-Mexican neighbors about the culture.

Baile Folklórico includes the many folk dances from different regions of Mexico. Many of these dances resulted from a long evolution of dance as popular and traditional art forms in Mexico. Each Mexican state has certain folk dances with styles, costumes and accompanying music that represent the cultural uniqueness of that region. These dances are called Bailes Regionales.



Folklórico dancers at La Fiesta Mexicana in Woodburn

Jarabet Tapatio Mexican Hat dance from the state of Jalisco.

La Danza del Venado The Dance of the Deer, a traditional dance of the Yaqui people from the northern region of Sonora.

Sones Jarochos Dance style from the state of Veracruz.

Danza de los Viejitos Dance of the Old Men from the state of Michoacán.



Danza de los Viejitos on a plaza in Pazcuaro, Mexico

La Danza de los Viejitos is usually performed by children or young people wearing carved wooden masks of old men. They imitate their elders with very humorous movements, dancing with heavy, difficult footwork while bending over a cane. The intention of the dance is not to make fun of older people but to honor them. In Mexico, elders are very important and people go to them for advice because they have wisdom and experience. This dance is a way for the youth to show their respect.

Words to Review

- Jarabet Tapatio
- Danza de los Viejitos
- La Danza del Venado
- Baile Folklórico
- Sones Jarochos

Dancer Profiles



Sandra Salazar, dancer with Lo Nuestro Baile Folklórico

Lo Nuestro Baile Folklórico and Maestro Manuel Ramos

Manuel Ramos was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. He is the director and *maestro* of Lo Nuestro Baile Folklórico youth dance group in Forest Grove and Hillsboro. *Maestro* Ramos first learned about traditional dance and celebrations while attending school in Mexico. He moved to the United States when he was eight years old.

Because he loved dancing and theater and was dedicated to sharing his culture,

Maestro Ramos and a migrant teacher started Baile Folklórico youth dance groups in Hillsboro and eastern Oregon. In 1984 he took classes at the University of Guadalajara to improve his intricate footwork skills and knowledge of regional dances and their costumes. Manuel Ramos earned a Bachelors of Arts degree and began teaching school where he is a staunch advocate of multicultural education. He believes that it is important to share his Mexican heritage and traditions with his family and students in order to keep the Mexican culture alive.



“Folklórico dance makes youth feel proud about who they are and encourages them to continue passing the traditions on to others.”

—Manuel Ramos



Costumes laid out for performance by Lo Nuestro dancers



L. Rocío Espinoza Cotero

L. Rocío Espinoza Cotero

L. Rocío Espinoza Cotero started dancing with her grandfather at the age of eight in the city of Cuernavaca, Mexico. Her grandfather passed his knowledge of pre-Hispanic dances and ceremonies on to her.

She continued her study of traditional Mexican folk dances by attending two professional schools of dance. During her 15 years as a dancer, she performed throughout Mexico with several groups. Since moving to Oregon she has been teaching folklórico and pre-Hispanic dance at Central Cultural in Cornelius and through residencies and workshops in the schools.

THINK ABOUT THIS!

- What are your favorite types of dance?
- Do you dance folk dances or do you know someone who does?
- Are there dances that you learned from your family or friends?
- What are they and what types of music go with the dances?



Traditional Foodways

The face of Oregon in the new millennium is quite different than it was 50 years ago. Today, the Mexican presence is well established from Coos Bay to Nyssa, from Medford to Portland, from Milton-Freewater to Astoria. *Supermercados* (supermarkets), *panaderías* (bakeries) and *tortillerías* (tortilla factories) are found wherever there is a consistent Mexican population that requires authentic Mexican dishes. The necessary ingredients for *mole*, *tamales*, *carne asada*, *pico de gallo*, *chorizo* and *buñuelos* are now available in Mexican stores as well as in grocery chains. The familiar aromas of *chile* and *frijoles*, *empanadas* and *menudo* emanate from home kitchens and restaurants around the state, reminding us of how important food and its preparation are in communicating and sharing who we are.

Typical market in Mexico



Tortillas are the everyday bread in a Mexican community. They are sometimes handmade on weekends or for special occasions. In this first photo, Doña Petra Torres of Hermiston makes traditional *tortillas* for lunch. She mixes flour and water to make the dough. She kneads the dough on a *metate*, a stone grinding surface. Next, she forms the dough into small balls. Then she uses her hands to pat out each individual *tortilla*. The *tortillas* are flat and perfectly round when she finishes.



Doña Petra Torres making Tortillas



Women making tortillas in Mexico

- First - grind the corn on a metate
- Second - shape dough into small balls
- Third - hand pat and shape the tortillas
- Last - cook on a flat comal



Metate

A *metate* is a flat stone base used for grinding corn and other grains into meal or flour. The *mano* is the rounded, smaller stone that is held in the hand and rubbed back and forth on the *metate* to grind. Ground corn is used to make many dishes including *tamales*. *Tamales* and other traditional foods are prepared to celebrate Christmas, birthdays and graduations.

Traditional Foodways continued



Sugar skulls for El Día de los Muertos



THINK ABOUT THIS!

- What is your favorite Mexican food, ingredients and spices?
- Does it remind you of food from other countries? If so, what foods and what countries?
- What are some traditional foods eaten in your home?
- Do you eat special foods on holidays? If so, what and when do you eat them?
- Is there a special process for making this food?
- Collect a traditional recipe from your family.
- Compile a class recipe book.
- Find out more about the history of chocolate.

History of Chocolate

Archaeologists discovered that **Olmecs** were probably the first to use **cacao** or cocoa beans followed by the **Maya**. “**Chocolatl**” was a drink made from roasted cocoa beans, water and spices. Cocoa beans were so valuable they were like money. They were also given as gifts at ceremonies and traded for cloth, jade, ceremonial feathers and other goods.

Recipe

Mexican Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups milk and either
- 3.3 oz bar of Mexican chocolate
- OR
- 3.3 oz semisweet chocolate chips with 1 tsp sugar and 1/2 tsp cinnamon

To make Mexican hot chocolate

- 1) Break the Mexican chocolate into pieces or use semi-sweet chocolate chips, sugar and cinnamon. Put them in a pot on the stove.
- 2) Add the milk and bring the mixture to a simmer. Stir mixture until the chocolate is melted.
- 3) Once the chocolate is melted, the milk is traditionally whipped with a wooden beater called a **molinillo** until it is frothy. Put the carved end of the **molinillo** in the pot of hot chocolate and hold the handle between your two palm, roll it back and forth rapidly to froth the hot milk.
- 5) Serve the hot chocolate while it is frothy and warm.



Tortilla maker at Fiesta Mexicana event in Woodburn

Words to Review

supermercados	chile
panaderías	frijoles
tortillerías	empanadas
mole	menudo
tamales	metate
tortilla	mano
carne asada	molinillo
pico de gallo	chocolatl
chorizo	cacao
buñuelos	



Sergio Tiburcio Barron making blood sausage at the Carneceria in Woodburn



Traditional Medicine

Curanderismo, also known as holistic or folk healing, is practiced by a *curandero* (male healer) or *curandera* (female healer). There are different layers of *curanderismo* which encompass the physical, the spiritual and the psychological health of an individual. Specific objects, herbs and rituals are associated with each layer of healing. Folk remedies were the first forms of medicine practiced.

Eva Castellanoz

Eva Castellanoz was born in Valle de Santiago, Guanajuato in 1939. Her name, in the native language of Nahuatl, means magical child. Eva learned her rich traditions from her parents who sang *corridos* (Mexican ballads), created poems, made clothing and furniture from scratch and celebrated Mexican festivals. Her exposure to traditional Mexican art and culture influenced Eva to become a traditional artist and healer.

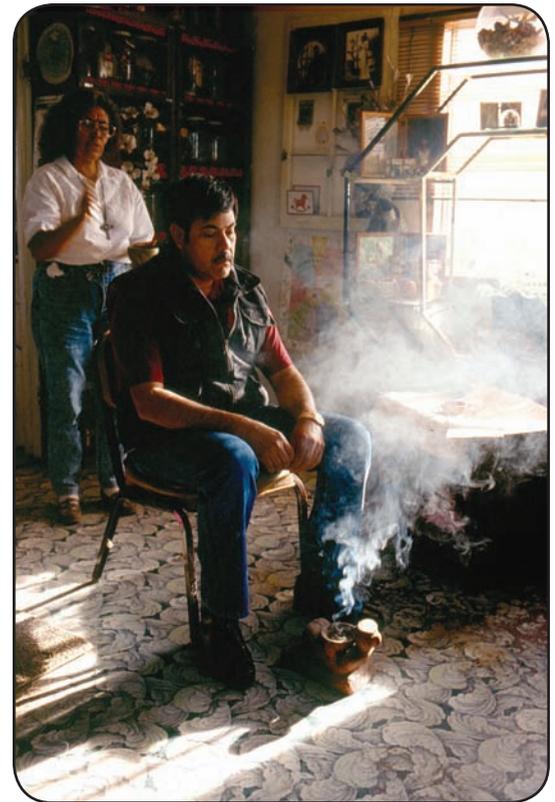
When she was a child, Eva moved with her family from Mexico to the United States. Like many Mexican immigrants, they spent long hours working the land but

made time for art, poetry, music and stories. Art provided relief and was beautiful and healing. Eva learned how to make *coronas* or wax and paper flower crowns that women wear on their heads during different rites of passage. Eva's parents used healing plants and herbs. Both of her parents were *curanderos*, or healers. Once a month, Eva's mother made a healing *cilantro* stew that helped protect the family from colds and digestive troubles. Eva still uses recipes like this to heal her family.



Eva Castellanoz holding a corona

Eva now lives in Nyssa in eastern Oregon. On special occasions she continues making *coronas* for friends and families. She shares her knowledge with her



Eva Castellanoz from Nyssa is widely recognized for her traditional remedies

community. She was called a “national treasure” by the President of the United States when she received the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award in 1987.



THINK ABOUT THIS!

Traditional Remedies

- What are some traditional remedies used in your family?
- Do you have a cure for a stomach ache?
- Do you have a way to get rid of warts?
- Do you use plants such as peppermint or aloe for remedies?

Words to Review

<i>curanderismo</i>	remedies
<i>curandera</i>	cilantro
<i>curandero</i>	corona



Language

The official languages of countries of the Americas were determined by the nations that colonized them. For example, Mexico, Central and most of South America claim Spanish,

the United States speaks English, Canada is bilingual with both English and French spoken and Brazil speaks Portuguese. While these are official languages, each country has many indigenous groups that speak native languages. These existed long

before the European explorers reached the Americas. Language is important cultural information by which people pass on vital traditions. Many families of Mexican heritage maintain bilingual households where children grow up speaking both Spanish and English. Do any of the words below have the same Latin root?

<u>Números</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>#</u>
uno	one	1
dos	two	2
tres	three	3
cuatro	four	4
cinco	five	5
seis	six	6
siete	seven	7
ocho	eight	8
nueve	nine	9
diez	ten	10
once	eleven	11
doce	twelve	12
trece	thirteen	13
catorce	fourteen	14
quince	fifteen	15
dieciséis	sixteen	16
diecisiete	seventeen	17
dieciocho	eighteen	18
diecinueve	nineteen	19
veinte	twenty	20
treinta	thirty	30
cuarenta	forty	40
cincuenta	fifty	50
sesenta	sixty	60
setenta	seventy	70
ochenta	eighty	80
noventa	ninety	90
cien	one hundred	100

TRY THIS!

<u>Words</u>	<u>Palabras</u>	<u>Pronunciación</u>
Hello	Hola	(OH-lah)
How are you?	¿Cómo estás?	(COH-moh eh-STAHHS)
Good morning	Buenos días	(BWAY-nohs DEE-ahs)
Good afternoon ...	Buenas tardes ...	(BWAY-nahs TAR-dehs)
Good night	Buenas noches ..	(BWAY-nahs NOH-chase)
Good-bye!	Adios!	(ah-dee-OHS)
My name is... ..	Me llamo... ..	(may YAH-moh)
Yes	Sí	(see)
No	No	(noh)

<u>Colors</u>	<u>Colores</u>	<u>Pronunciación</u>
Red	rojo	(ROH-hoh)
Orange	naranja	(nar-an-HAH)
Yellow	amarillo	(ah-mah-REE-yoh)
Green	verde	(Ver-day)
Blue	azul	(ah-SOOL)
Pink	rosa(do)	(ROH-sah)
Brown	morado(a)	(More-AH-do)
White	blanco(a)	(BLAHN-coh)
Black	negro(a)	(NAY-groh)
Gray	gris	(Greese)

Mexico



Refer to the map of Mexico on page one. From the list of Mexican states below place their names in the correct location. Choose one state as a research topic.

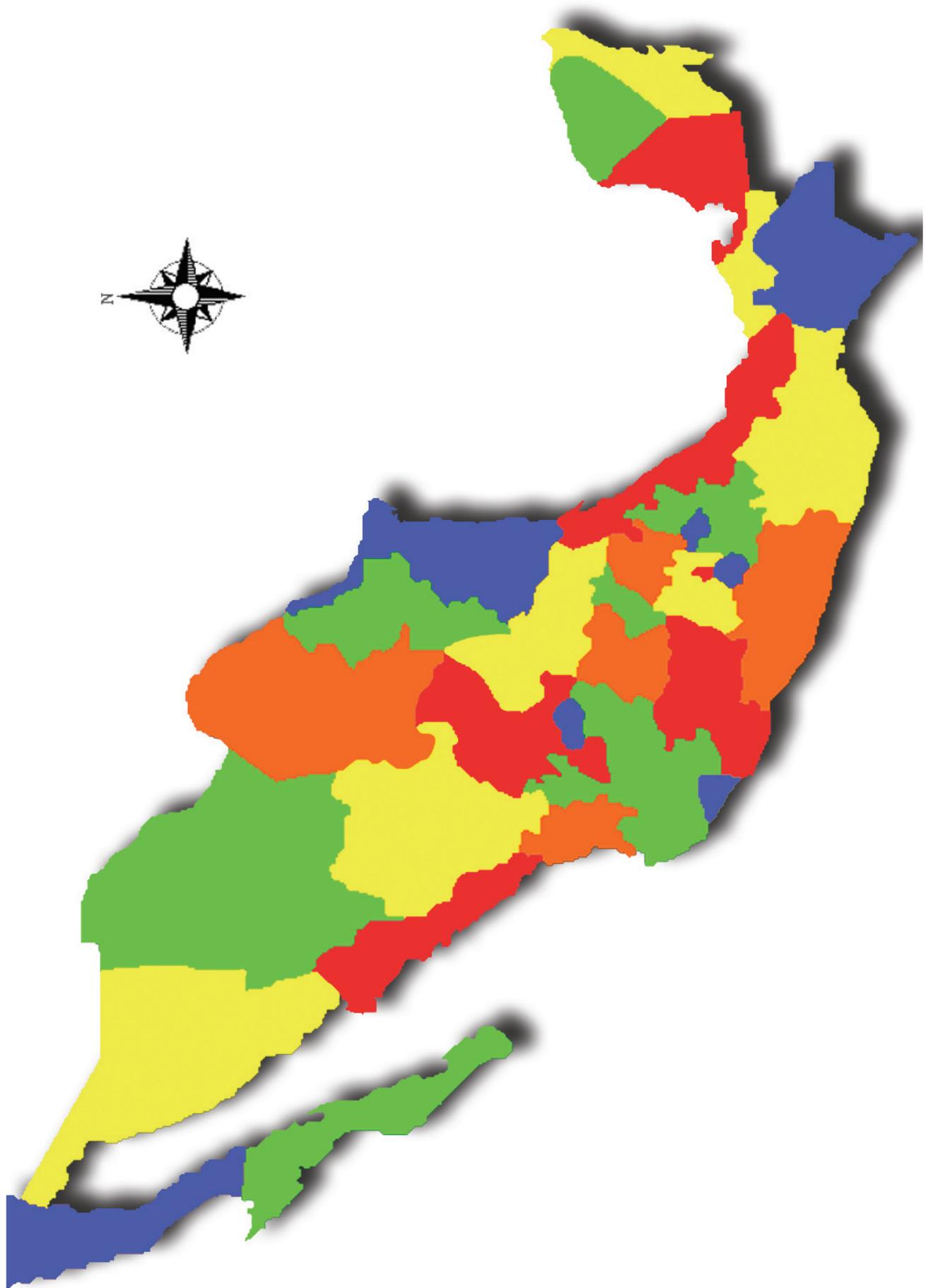
Find out:

- what the land and climate are like
- what types of crops grow there
- what are the state's traditional music and dance
- what different culture groups live there

Interview people from your local community who are from that state or another state in Mexico.



Aguascalientes	Distrito Federal	Morelos	Sinaloa
Baja California Norte	Durango	Nayarit	Sonora
Baja California Sur	Guanajuato	Nuevo León	Tabasco
Campeche	Guerrero	Oaxaca	Tamaulipas
Coahuila	Hidalgo	Puebla	Tlaxcala
Colima	Jalisco	Queretaro	Veracruz
Chiapas	México	Quintana Roo	Yucatan
Chihuahua	Michoacán	San Luis Potosi	Zacatecas





Folklife Word Search



C W E G I O L K N V D T E U Y B J O K F
A H J U S J O D J Y F D I V E R S E E W
C F R A W E A V I N G S P E L B V C X Z
Q O S D A C C U S T O M S E N O P M U Y
M L N A B V O C X Z A S D M A F G U H J
E K R L D A N C E S T Y U B I C P S L K
W L Q U A E T H N I C Z X R C D O I B N
F I E P U L I E D A U U G O N T E C N M
H F E E S C N M X W L S R I L B N R K Z
K E Q W P K E I F V T R A D I T I O N S
X B R W O R N S O B U N M E O D N C E Y
W E E I T C T P K H R L E R I N D H I M
B F L K T C O H S P E X C Y R A I E M B
A E I N E A E E C U S T Y R P O G T T O
E X G W R M G R N O M S O M B R E R O L
A E I N Y C L E G E N D E T U I N C A I
Q J O M I T S E M A R I A C H I O F T Z
A Z U O C C U P A T I O N A L F U J Y E
D E S P I R I T U A L B A N C E S P I R
C U S T T T R Y Q B H U K W F R U N M D



ethnic
culture
traditions
hemisphere
continent
heritage
folklife
customs

occupational
religious
embroidery
crochet
pottery
weavings
symbolize
peacock
diverse

indigenous
spiritual
Guadalupe
mariachi
sombrero
dances
music
legend



Glossary

bilingual

The ability to speak two languages with equal skill

buñuelos

A crispy sweet bread in syrup

calaveritas de azúcar

Sugar skulls used on altars or *ofrendas* to celebrate El Día de los Muertos

carne asada

Baked or broiled meat

charreadas or jaripeos

Mexican-style rodeos

charros

Mexican cowboys who participate in roping, bull riding and other equestrian competitions

Cinco de Mayo

A holiday held on May 5th which celebrates General Ignacio Zaragoza's victory over the French at Puebla

cumpleaños

Birthday

curanderismo

Holistic or folk healing that is practiced by a *curandero* (male healer) or *curandera* (female healer)

Danza de los Viejitos

A traditional dance from the state of Michoacán. It is called Dance of the Old Men.

El Día de las Madres

Mother's Day in Mexico and celebrated on May 10th

Altar celebrating El Dia de los Muertos created by French Prairie Middle School students, Woodburn



Corn husk dolls made by Luisa Zaragoza

El Día de los Muertos

The Day of the Dead which is celebrated on November 2nd. This holiday is widely commemorated in Mexico as the symbolic annual return of the spirits of deceased loved ones.

El Día del Niño

A holiday celebrated on April 30 which recognizes the importance of children in Mexican families and society

El Día de los Reyes

Three Kings Day or Epiphany celebrated on January 6 to mark the arrival of the three kings to pay homage to the Infant Jesus

ethnic group

A group of people who come from, or whose ancestors come from, the same country or culture

folklife

Folklife is the traditions that are passed on in communities of people who have shared interests, beliefs and values

folk groups

Groups of people who have the same traditions and ways of living

immigrants

People who move from one country to live and work in another

indigenous

People originally from or native to an area. Indigenous civilizations of Mexico include: Aztec, Maya, Toltec, Mixtec, Zapotec and Olmec.

Glossary continued

Las Posadas

Celebrated from December 16 to the 24. It is a folk drama reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for lodging in anticipation of the birth of Baby Jesus.

lowriders

Vehicles that are modified and ornately decorated

mariachi

A lively style of Mexican music that usually includes several guitars and trumpets. It is played by musicians who wear silver studded *charro* outfits and wide brimmed hats.

metate

A flat stone base used for grinding corn and other grains into meal or flour

molinillo

A wooden beater used to whip milk into a froth when preparing Mexican hot chocolate

ofrendas

Home altars decorated with photographs of the departed, personal items, images of religious figures, special breads called *pan de muertos*, sugar skulls (*calaveritas de azúcar*) and other items

padrinos

Godparents



Maria Isabel Pena holding her handmade eggshell piñata

piñata

Colorful three dimensional shape with a hollow interior that is filled with candy and treats and broken by children at celebrations

ponche

A punch made of tea, citrus, tamarind, guava and cinnamon

quinceañera

A fifteen year old female; also celebration of a female's fifteenth birthday. This birthday is particularly important for teenage girls in Mexican culture because it marks entry into adulthood and signifies new responsibilities.

tamales

A traditional dish made of meat, cheese, or beans and cornmeal wrapped in a cornhusk and steamed

traditions

A way of doing things that is passed on from one person to another

vaqueros

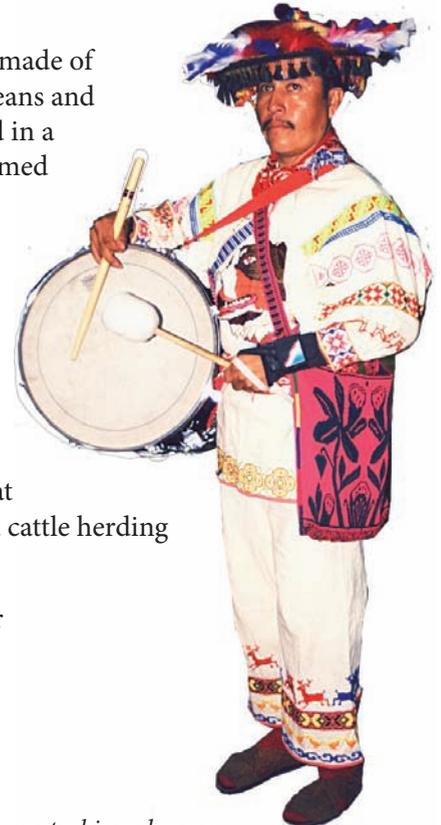
A cowboy skilled at horsemanship and cattle herding

vihuelas

A five string guitar

villancicos

Traditional songs



Drummer keeps the beat for matachines dancers on the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe



Boys performing a Huichol style dance for the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe

Learn more about Mexican Traditional Arts

Resources

Books

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www.almaproject.dpsk12.org/

El Alma de la Raza, The Soul of the People. A cultural curriculum infusion model. Lesson plans created by the Denver public Schools

www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Amerindian/index.html

Ancient Indian Art of the Americas, The Art Institute of Chicago

www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Amerindian/pages/Amerind_lessons.shtml

Lesson plans for Ancient Indian Art of the Americas

www.artic.03edu/artaccess/AA_Amerindian/pages/Amerind_family2.shtml

Family Activities for Ancient Indian Art of the Americas

www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/teachers/

Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos for teachers and students



Oregon *Folklife* Series



Mexican American Folklife in Oregon



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