

A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

Elementary

Bringing Cultural Awareness to Your Classroom
with Activities Across the Curriculum



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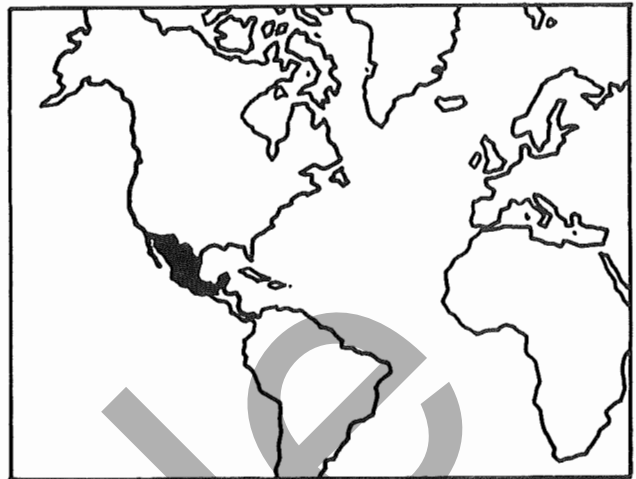
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First Stop...Mexico

Area: 761,604 sq. miles
Capital City: Mexico City
Population: 113,724,226
Main Language: Spanish
Main Religion: Roman Catholicism
Currency: Mexican Peso
Government: Federal Republic
Flag:



The national flag has three vertical bands. From left to right they are green, white, and red. Green stands for independence, white stands for religion, and red stands for union. The coat of arms in the center illustrates an Aztec legend that explains the founding of Mexico City.

For Your Information

Mexico is located on the continent of North America. Its neighbor to the north is the United States. Guatemala and Belize border Mexico to the south. The Pacific Ocean is west of Mexico, and the Gulf of Mexico is to the east. Mexico has two large peninsulas. The Yucatan Peninsula forms the eastern end of Mexico. The Baja California Peninsula is on Mexico's western coast. "The Baja" has dry desert areas and high mountains. It is almost 800 miles long and is one of the longest peninsulas in the world.

Most people living in Mexico are part Spanish and part Native Mexican. For thousands of years, the Native Mexicans were the only people in Mexico. In 1519, Spain began to conquer Mexico. Over many years, the Spanish and Native Mexican cultures have blended to form the rich culture of Mexico.

For thousands of years, corn has been the most important crop in Mexico. Farmers make up approximately one-fifth of the Mexican population. Today, many farmers are trying to immigrate to the United States in search of work, because they can't find work in the overcrowded cities of Mexico.

Fascinating Facts



In Mexico, children are given both their father's last name and the mother's maiden name. For example, if a child whose first name is Carlos, has a father named Juan Gonzáles and a mother named Luisa Garcia, the child is then called Carlos Gonzáles Garcia. This Mexican custom of naming children helps preserve the heritage of both parents.



Some Mexicans use *adobe*, a mixture of wet clay and straw, to build houses. On hot days, adobe walls keep cooler temperatures inside the house.



Mexico's land is composed of mountains, deserts, and tropical zones. There are three mountain ranges; all of them are named Sierra Madre. Two of the ranges run down each side of Mexico's coastlines and the third runs between the coasts on the southern end of Mexico just below Mexico City.



The ancient Aztec city of Tenochtitlán was built in 1325, and was destroyed by the Spanish when they conquered Mexico. It is now the site of Mexico City, the capital of Mexico.



When the Spanish army arrived in Mexico in 1519, Mexico was inhabited by over 700 Indian tribes.



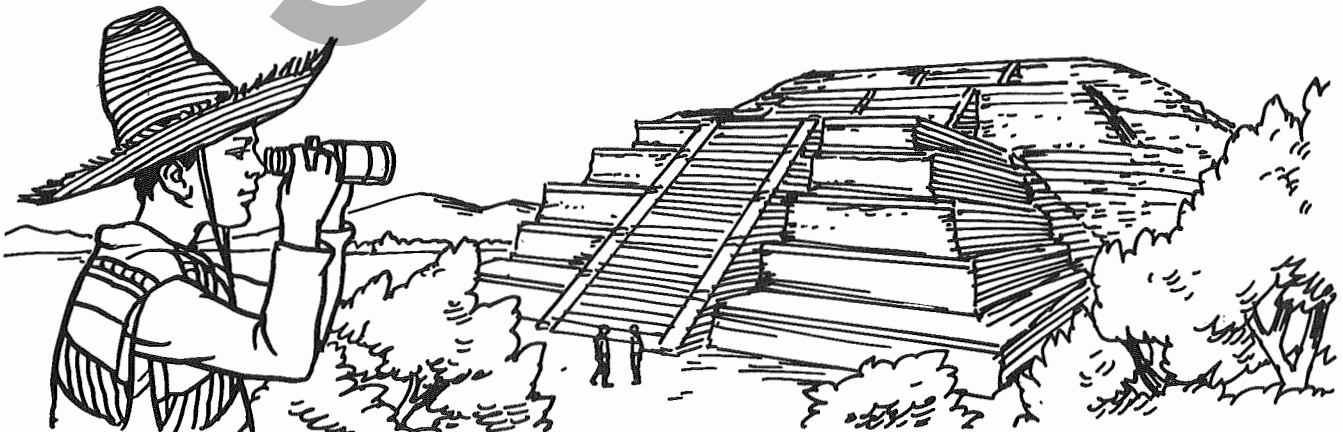
Before the war between Mexico and the United States (1846), Mexico's territory included all of Texas, California, Nevada, and Utah; and parts of Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming.



In 1862, Napoleon III attempted to invade Mexico. His army was defeated by the Mexican forces on May 5, 1867, at the Battle of Puebla. Mexicans still celebrate the victory, or Cinco de Mayo, every fifth of May with parades, piñatas, and dances.



The tortilla, Mexico's most famous bread, is an unleavened corn or flour cake. Preparation includes soaking the corn kernels in limewater until they are soft enough to grind, and then adding water, a little at a time, to make the dough. The dough is rolled until it is very thin and then it is baked.



Language Activities

Colors

rojo (row-ho)	red
azul (as-ool)	blue
amarillo (ah-ma-ree-yo)	yellow
verde (vehr-day)	green
anaranjado (a-nar-an-ha-dough)	orange
rosado (row-sa-dough)	pink
marrón (ma-rone)	brown
blanco (blan-co)	white
negro (nay-grow)	black

Spanish Numbers

uno (oon-o) --one
dos (doss)--two
tres (tress)--three
cuatro (kwa-tro)--four
cinco (seen-ko)--five
seis (sseyss)--six
siete (ssyete)--seven
ocho (o-cho)--eight
nueve (nwe-be)--nine
dies (deeyes)--ten

Days of the Week

lunes (loon-ez)
martes (mar-tez)
miércoles (me-air-ko-lez)
jueves (whe-vez)
viernes (vi-air-nez)
sábado (sa-ba-dó)
domingo (doh-min-go)

*Days are listed Monday-Sunday

Everyday Spanish Expressions

hola (o-la)	hello
buenos días (bwe-noos de-yass)	good day
por favor (poor fah-vohr)	please
adiós (a-dee-oss)	good-bye
¿Cómo te llamas? (coh-mow tay yah-mahs)	What is your name?
¿Cuántos años tienes? (kwan-tows anyos tee-yn-ays)	How old are you?
¿Cómo estas? (coh-mow ay-stahs)	How are you?
Muy bien, gracias. (mooee bee-ain grah-see-ahs)	I am fine, thank you.
¿Habla ingles? (ah-blah eeng-lace)	Do you speak English?

Music

Mexican children sing the following song, "Buenos Días," to the tune of "Happy Birthday."

**Buenos días a ustedes,
Buenos días a ustedes,
Buenos días, buenos días,
Buenos días a ustedes.**

Good morning to you,
Good morning to you,
Good morning, good morning,
Good morning to you.





Mexican Recipe

Tortillas

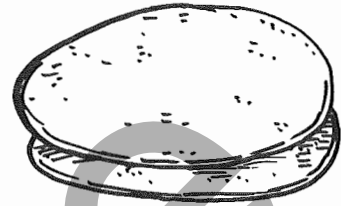
Ingredients:

4 cups of corn, wheat or white flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot water

1 tsp. salt

1 cup shortening



Directions:

Mix flour, salt and shortening. Add hot water a little at a time (more than $\frac{3}{4}$ cup may be needed). Mix until firm and let stand. Roll a heaping tablespoon of the dough with a rolling pin until it is smooth and thin. Cook on a hot griddle over a low flame until moderately brown. Butter and serve as bread with a meal or as a snack.



Classroom Activities



- Have the children assume Mexican names for a day, or have the children find out what their name would be in the Mexican custom of preserving the heritage of both parents.
- Have a Mexican feast! Make the flour tortillas on page 6, and enjoy them with other Mexican foods including tacos, fajitas, and burritos.
- Celebrate Cinco de Mayo (any time of year will do, but May 5th is best) with colorful costumes, piñatas, and tissue paper flowers (see directions on page 8) as decorations. Provide the children with a sombrero and let them make up a version of the Mexican hat dance.
- Explore Mexico's diverse land by making a topographical map out of cardboard, clay, and any other creative materials to show the water masses, the peninsulas, the dry deserts, and the high mountains.
- In cooperative groups, have the children make adobe houses using clay shaped into small cubes as building blocks. Let the houses dry in the sun.
- Decorate the classroom with Mexican art. Use the tissue-paper flower directions on page 8.





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