

# Cinco de Mayo

Have you ever celebrated Cinco de Mayo? If so, you are like many other Americans or Mexicans who observe this holiday. “Cinco de Mayo” means *the fifth of May*, which is the day the holiday is celebrated.

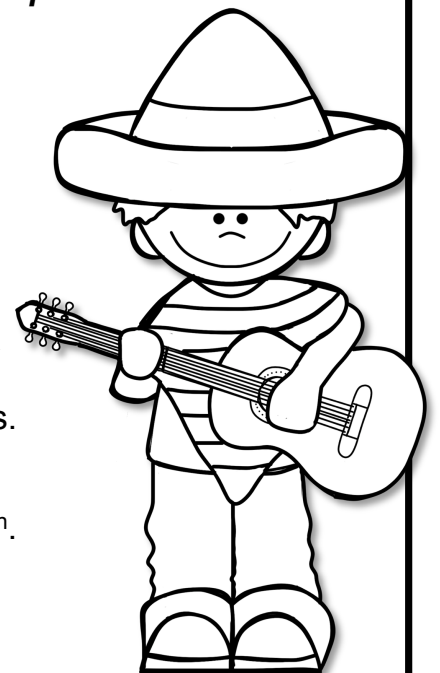
Many people mistakenly believe that Cinco de Mayo is the Mexican Independence Day. The two holidays are separate and have different beginnings. While Cinco de Mayo is on May 5<sup>th</sup>, Mexican Independence Day is celebrated on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

In 1967, a group of students at California State University saw that there were no Chicano (United States residents with a Mexican heritage) holidays. They felt that the Chicano people should have their own holiday to celebrate their history and culture in the United States. They organized the first Cinco de Mayo celebration. The holiday grew from there and today is largely celebrated throughout the country.

The students chose May 5<sup>th</sup> for a specific reason. It was on this date in 1862 that the Mexican people showed a tremendous amount of courage during the Battle of Puebla. During this battle, 4,500 Mexican soldiers defeated the French army of 6,500 soldiers at Puebla, Mexico. What is really remarkable about this victory is that the Mexican soldiers were not really trained, professional soldiers at all. They were common people, such as farmers or shopkeepers who did not have any true experience with fighting as an army. It was their courage and fierce determination to defend their Mexican land and country that helped them win the battle. This “Batalla de Puebla” became a symbol of Mexican **patriotism**.

Today, people of all cultures celebrate Cinco de Mayo throughout the United States. There are many parades, festivals, and community events where the Mexican heritage is celebrated. Families have cookouts and picnics with delicious Mexican food, such as enchiladas, empanadas, and burritos. Children are blindfolded, given a large stick, and cheered on to break hanging piñatas. When the hollow piñata breaks apart, the children scramble to pick up the falling candy. Mariachi music can often be heard playing throughout the streets of the Cinco de Mayo festivals.

If you have never celebrated this holiday before, perhaps you will now want to plan on joining in on the fun this May 5<sup>th</sup>. Start looking up some tasty Mexican recipes and find the nearest parade to celebrate the Mexican heritage. Happy Cinco de Mayo!



# Cinco de Mayo

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions:

1. What does "Cinco de Mayo" mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who started the holiday Cinco de Mayo in the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. When is the Mexican Independence Day?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did the students choose the date of May 5<sup>th</sup> for the Cinco de Mayo holiday?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Name 2 ways people can celebrate Cinco de Mayo today.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. In the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, the word "patriotism" means:

a. love of one's country

b. types of food

c. American

d. defend, protect

7. Why do you think the small, Mexican untrained army was able to win the battle against a larger, well-trained army?

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