

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

## Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo (May 5<sup>th</sup>) is a day when Mexican Americans celebrate their Mexican culture and heritage. Many people mistakenly think that Cinco de Mayo is Mexican Independence Day. It is not. Mexico celebrates its Independence on September 16<sup>th</sup>—the day when Father Hidalgo gave his famous speech (*Grito de Dolores*) urging the Mexican people to fight for their independence from Spanish rule.



Cinco de Mayo, on the other hand, recognizes the victory of the Mexican army over an invading French army in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. (This was 50 years after Mexico had gained independence from Spain.) Despite being vastly outnumbered by the French, the poorly equipped Mexican soldiers destroyed a French army that was considered to be the best in the world and had not suffered a defeat in nearly half a century.

Unfortunately, the Mexican victory was short-lived. The next year, the French captured Mexico City and went on to take over the whole country. However, the victory at Puebla remained a source of pride and inspiration to the Mexican people and gave them courage to resist the French occupation. Faced with continuing Mexican resistance and under pressure from the United States, France withdrew its forces from Mexico in 1866.

Today, Cinco de Mayo is no longer a big holiday in Mexico. It is pretty much celebrated only in the state of Puebla. In the United States, however, Cinco de Mayo has become an important festival of Mexican culture. People of all backgrounds enjoy celebrating the day with parades, parties, and traditional Mexican music, dancing, and foods.

1. What is history behind Cinco de Mayo?
2. What do you do to celebrate the holiday? .