



Topical Tidbits

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Mexico

Hello! ¡Hola!

Mexico, our neighbor to the south, is a land of old and new. When the Spanish, led by Hernán Cortés, first arrived in 1519, the Aztecs were at the height of their power. Founded in 1325 A.D., their floating city, Tenochtitlán, awed the Spaniards. The Aztecs thought the visitors were envoys from their god Quetzalcoatl so treated them with great honor. This made it easy for Cortés and his men to eventually defeat the entire Aztec Empire. Soon the ancient pyramids were being torn down and the bricks used to build churches and other buildings. Today you can still visit some of these ancient structures along with modern state-of-the-art structures. You will also hear people speaking Spanish, thanks to Cortés. **¡Viva México!**

Interesting Facts:

- The official name of Mexico is Estados Unidos Mexicanos (United Mexican States).
- Mexico's size is 756,066 square miles, which is almost three times larger than Texas.
- The border between Mexico and the U. S. is the second largest border in the world (only the U.S.-Canadian border is longer).
- Mexico City has the highest elevation and is the oldest city in North America. It is also one of the largest cities in the world.
- Mexico is located in the *Ring of Fire*, one of the earth's most violent earthquake and volcano zones.
- About 60% of the modern Mexican population is *mestizo* (Indian-Spanish), 30% is Indian or predominately Indian, 9% is Caucasian, and 1% is other.
- The Chihuahua is the world's smallest dog and is named for a Mexican state.

- The largest wildcat in North America is the jaguar, which can be found in Mexico's southern jungles.



This souvenir sheet, issued in 2001, is from a painting by Rodolfo Morales (1925-2001).

Estados Unidos Mexicanos

DIRECTIONS:

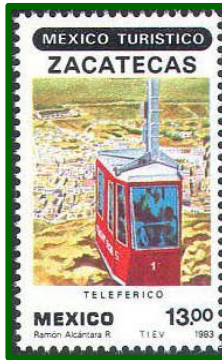
Mexico is divided into 31 states. Read the description under each stamp. Then, locate the state on the map and color it the same color as the border around the stamp.



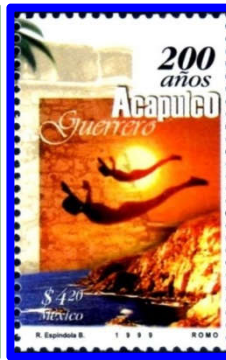
The monarch butterfly makes its winter home in the highlands of **Michoacán**.



A woman from Oaxaca is wearing a traditional dress embroidered with flowers. **Oaxaca** is famous for its delicious cheese.



The *teleferico*, a sightseeing ride, has been operating since 1979, and is one of the most visited attractions in **Zacatecas**.



The cliff divers of Acapulco dive 100-135 feet into the sea below. Acapulco is located in the state of **Guerrero**.



The Chihuahua is the smallest breed of dog and is named after the state of **Chihuahua** in Mexico.



The Deer Dance is a native Yaqui dance that honors nature and the deer. It's from the northern state of **Sonora**.



The state of **Querétaro** is home to an enormous aqueduct consisting of seventy four arches. It was built between 1726 – 1738 to bring water to the local residents.



Coahuila is famous for its locally woven multi-colored blankets called *serapes*.



There are nearly 20 Mayan ruins sites on the **Yucatán** Peninsula in Mexico. The ruins date from about 3,000



Guanajuato is a city in the state of **Guanajuato** that is carved out of the hills. The many churches there ring their bells throughout the day.



The ruins of Palenque are thought to have been populated from 226 BC to around 799 AD. They can be visited in the state of **Chiapas**.

Mexico

Traditional Mexican Dress

There are many types of traditional clothing found throughout the Mexico. Each region has its own distinct look which is a blend of European and Native American designs.

The clothes are made from a variety of materials— cotton, agave, wool, silk, and bark.

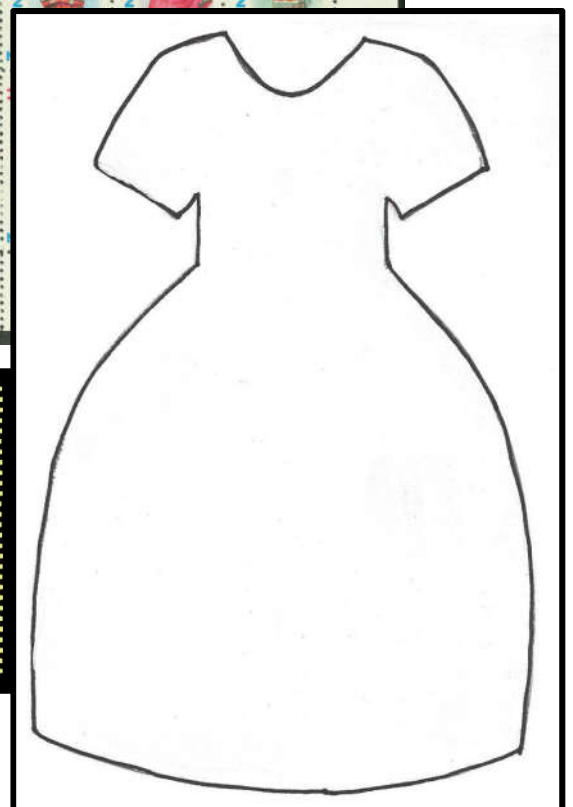
They feature beautiful designs in bold colors. Read about some of these below, then design your own Mexican dress.



This 1962 sheet of Christmas Seals shows 50 different traditional costumes from Mexico. These stamps are called *cinderellas* because they look like real stamps but can't be used to mail a letter.



These stamps were issued by Mexico in 1981 and show traditional outfits from Michoacán, Puebla, Jalisco, and Yucatan.



Day of the Dead

Day of the Dead, or *Día de los Muertos*, is observed on November 1st and 2nd in Mexico. It is a time to honor, remember, and celebrate all those who have died. Customs observed are a combination of ancient Aztec and Catholic beliefs. Families celebrate by making altars in their homes with pictures of those that have died. They decorate the altars with flowers, *papel picado*, and favorite foods of the deceased. Families then go to their relatives' graves and clean and decorate them with flowers. Popular symbols for this festival are skulls and skeletons.

Papel Picado

In 2016, the U. S. Postal service issued a booklet of *Colorful Celebrations* Forever stamps featuring eye-popping patterns that showcase geometric shapes, flowers, and birds. The stamps feature designs based on a Mexican art form known as *papel picado*, Spanish for "pierced paper." The tissue paper banners are strung together and hung from the ceiling for special occasions like Christmas, birthdays, and weddings. *Papel picado* is also used to decorate altars for Day of the Dead.



Mexican Products

When you buy a pair of shoes at a shop, you give the store money and they give you the shoes. Buying and selling items is called **trade**. When you buy the shoes you are trading your money for the product. Most likely the shoes came from a foreign country. Like people, countries engage in trade. They buy and sell things. When one country buys something from another country, it's called an **import**. When a country sells something to another country, it's called an **export**. Pictured on the stamps below are products Mexico exports. In 2015, the U.S. imported \$295 billion worth of products from Mexico. Cars and car parts were at the top of the list. See if you can match the Spanish word to each export on the stamp.

1.



5.

2.



6.

3.



7.

4.



8.

- A. Los libros
- B. Las fresas

- C. Las bicicletas
- D. Ganado y carne

- E. Los autos
- F. Los zapatos

- G. Tomates
- H. Miel

Mexico

