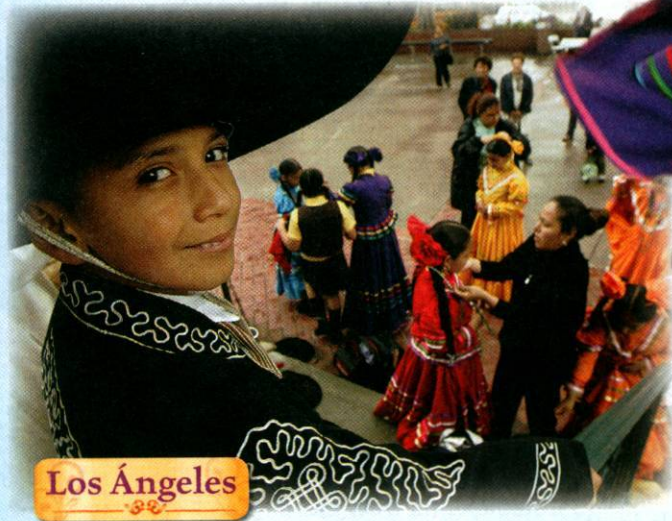




# ¡Cinco de Mayo!

**Cinco de Mayo** has become a popular celebration throughout the United States. However, not everyone who celebrates this uniquely Mexican holiday knows its origin. To find the reason, you must travel back to the year 1862 in Mexico. On May 5, in the town of Puebla de los Ángeles, the Mexican army, joined by farmers and townspeople, fought against the French and forced them to retreat. The Mexicans were led by General Ignacio Zaragoza and the town was later renamed Puebla de Zaragoza in his honor. Although the French went on to occupy Mexico City and assume a short-lived role in Mexico's government, *Cinco de Mayo* became a national holiday symbolizing Mexican unity.

A *Cinco de Mayo* celebration in Mexico includes dancing, music, and reenactments of the battle. In many parts of the U.S. where there is a large Mexican or Mexican-American community, you will often find *Cinco de Mayo* celebrations.



Los Ángeles

**Mariachis y bailarines** Folkloric dancers and musicians perform throughout the day in the Plaza Olvera during the *Cinco de Mayo* celebrations.

**México**

**Reconstrucción de la batalla**

A reenactment of the historic battle in Puebla commemorates Mexico's victory over the French.



**Vocabulario para celebrar**

<i>los bailarines</i>	dancers
<i>la batalla</i>	battle
<i>el ejército</i>	army
<i>los franceses</i>	French
<i>los músicos</i>	musicians
<i>la reconstrucción</i>	reenactment

**Washington, D.C.**

**Bailarín folklórico** A dancer performs in a traditional Mexican costume at the White House.

**Comparación cultural**

1. Do you know of a *Cinco de Mayo* celebration in your community or region? If so, how or where is it celebrated?
2. What important battles or historic events are celebrated in your community or state? How are they celebrated? Are they local or national holidays? Compare one of these holiday celebrations with the *Cinco de Mayo* celebrations.