

(Re)Learning Moment

Cinco de Mayo

In 1861, Mexico elected Benito Juárez president. A lawyer and member of the Indigenous Zapotec tribe, Juárez faced financial repayment demands from France, Britain, and Spain, resulting in each country sending naval forces to Veracruz, Mexico. While Britain and Spain negotiated, France sent its armed military to Mexico to expand its empire. At the Battle of Puebla, 6,000 French troops battled 2,000 Mexican citizens (mostly Indigenous Mexicans or of mixed ancestry). After a daylong battle, the French retreated, and this battle represented a symbolic victory. Today, primarily in the state of Puebla, Cinco de Mayo includes military parades, recreations of the battle, and other festivities to honor the unlikely victory at the Battle of Puebla. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo serves as a moment to celebrate Mexican culture and heritage.

(Re)Learn About Cinco de Mayo

- [7 Things You May Not Know About Cinco de Mayo](#) - a webpage curated by the History Channel
- [El Cinco de Mayo: An American Tradition](#) - e-book by David Hayes-Bautista (2012)
- [The Forgotten, Radical Roots of Cinco de Mayo](#) - podcast episode presented by Russell Contreras (2021)
- [The Real History of Cinco de Mayo](#) - a webpage curated by the Smithsonian Institution

Celebrate Respectfully

[The Anti-Defamation League](#) suggests several ways to respectfully learn about and celebrate Cinco de Mayo:

- Seek diverse stories and educators
- Avoid one-dimensional portrayals of Mexican people
- Be proactive in addressing issues of stereotypes as “teachable moments”