

**Integrating Food and Art in the High School Spanish
Classroom**

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Mexico Program

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this project is to collect three art projects and three recipes that may be utilized in the high school Spanish classroom. Integrating these types of activities into the Spanish classroom offer teachers the opportunity to go beyond mere language acquisition to teach cultural respect and appreciation. Students are able to experience first hand the unique cultural identity of Mexico through these projects.

My goal in my own Spanish classroom is to cook twice a year (once in the fall and once in the spring) for each level of Spanish (I, II, III, and IV). I also want to complete one art project per six weeks for each level of Spanish. However, these activities are too numerous to all be mentioned in a curriculum project of this size so three projected art projects and three recipes have been selected to share.

GRADE LEVEL

These projects could be adapted for any middle school or high school Spanish classroom of any level. The foods projects are most easily completed in a kitchen environment (such as the home economics lab) and the art projects are best completed in an uncarpeted classroom with a sink readily available.

BACKGROUND NOTES

These art projects and recipes were collected during a 4 1/2 week trip through Mexico sponsored by the US Department of Education and COMEXUS. These projects were collected from a wide range of locations, including:

Huichol Yarn Art-Real de Catorce, San Luis Potosi
Posada Stamping-Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes
Tile Painting-Puebla, Puebla
Salsa and Pastel Azteca-Cuernavaca, Morelos

STANDARDS

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
Chapter TEKS §114.22 Languages Other than English (LOTE)

(2) Cultures. The student gains knowledge and understanding of other cultures. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate an understanding of the practices (what people do) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied; and

(B) demonstrate an understanding of the products (what people create) and how they are related to the perspectives (how people perceive things) of the cultures studied.

(3) Connections. The student uses the language to make connections with other subject areas and to acquire information. The student is expected to:

(A) use resources (that may include technology) in the language and cultures being studied to gain access to information; and

(B) use the language to obtain, reinforce, or expand knowledge of other subject areas.

(4) Comparisons. The student develops insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing the student's own language and culture to another. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the student's own language and the language studied;

(B) demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the student's own culture and the cultures studied; and

(C) demonstrate an understanding of the influence of one language and culture on another.

OBJECTIVES

The students will compare the foods of their own cultures with foods of Mexico.

The students will gain a better understanding of different regions of Mexico through the artisan handcrafts of those regions.

MATERIALS

Yarn Art

- 5x5 cardboard squares
- 5x5 pieces of white paper
- yarn of various colors
- pencil
- Elmer's glue

Posada Stamping

- Styrofoam plates
- pencil
- scissors
- white bulletin board paper
- ink pads of different colors

Tile Painting

- assorted kitchen tiles
- craft paints in assorted colors
- paint brushes
- Styrofoam plates
- 8 oz plastic cups
- water

Green Salsa

- 12-14 tomatillos
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 small jalapeño pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 avocado
- 1 lime
- 1 tsp. salt

Red Salsa

- 8 Roma tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 small jalapeño pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 tsp. salt

Pastel Azteca

- pkg. 24 corn tortillas
- green salsa prepared according to previous recipe
- 1 whole chicken
- Queso Oaxaqueño
- Crema Fresco

PROCEDURES

Each of these projects can be completed in one 45 minute class period, with the exception of the Pastel Azteca, which requires an extra day for heating and eating. These activities are designed very informally and loosely so that both the teacher and students may complete the projects while enjoying the process of the project and not stressing over achieving a perfect result. Projects have also been designed to minimize costs.

Yarn Art

To begin the yarn art lesson, the teacher will begin by sharing a brief amount of information about the Huichol Indians so that the students will know the background of the project. Much information about the Indians is available through books and through the internet (see additional resources for a few examples). Then the students will draw a simple design on their 5x5 square of paper. Then the paper should be glued on a cardboard square to make it easier to work with. Then the students will fill in their drawings with yarn using Elmer's glue.

Posada Stamping

For the Posada stamping lesson, the teacher will begin by sharing a brief amount of information about Guadalupe Posada and also by displaying several examples of his work (see [Posada's Mexican Prints](#)). Then students will all be given a Styrofoam plate (a thicker piece of Styrofoam will produce a more favorable result, if available). Students should cut the bottom out of the plate so that it is small enough to fit into a large ink pad. Then students will sketch the outline of a design to be stamped onto their plate (encourage students to keep it simple). Then students will use a pencil to push into the plate along the outline of their design. The deeper and wider students are able to make the outline, the better the end result will be. Students will then press their piece of Styrofoam onto a large ink pad and then use it to stamp a piece of paper. This experience should give them the idea behind the concept of stamping without being too difficult or expensive.

Tile Painting

The teacher should begin by discussing the Talavera pottery of Puebla, Mexico, briefly and showing students examples of this beautiful style of pottery. (see below for resources). Then all students should be given a tile and paintbrush (The best manner I have found for acquiring tile

is to contact your local tile and flooring stores. They are usually more than willing to donate their cracked tiles for your classroom projects. These are perfect for the students to paint on, and they're free!). Students should sit in groups so that they share paint and a cup of water for rinsing. Once set up, students should paint their tiles according to their personal tastes and wishes. Tiles will need to be left on a table overnight to dry, and may be displayed the following day.

Green and Red Salsa

Both salsa recipes may be prepared in the same class period. There are countless recipes for making salsa, but from experience I can say that these recipes are quick and can be completed in a class period. The best environment is in a home economics classrooms with multiple kitchens. In this environment students may be assigned different tasks such as washing slicing, boiling, etc. However, if this environment is not readily available, then the teacher may prepare the salsa at the front of a typical classroom while the students salivate and watch!!

For green salsa, the tomatillos must first be peel and washed. Then the heart must be cut out of each tomatillo. Then tomatillos should be boiled in a large pot of water until the tomatillos begin to turn brown. Chop the end off of the jalapeño pepper and add it to the boiling water. If desired, remove seeds from pepper to reduce the spiciness of the salsa. While the tomatillos are boiling, the cilantro should be washed and approximately half of it should be chopped very finely and put in a blender. Also cut the ends off the garlic clove, peel it, and put it in a blender. Peel the avocado, remove the seed, and put it in the blender. Also add one teaspoon of salt to blender. Slice the lime in half and squeeze juice into blender. When tomatillos are finished boiling, add them to blender, as well. Blend mixture until a salsa is formed. Then salsa is ready to serve!

For red salsa, the recipe is very similar. The Roma tomatoes should be washed. Then remove the hearts and boil them until the skin begins to boil off. Also cut off the ends of the pepper and add it to the boiling water. Meanwhile, wash and chopped about half of the cilantro and add to blender. Cut the ends off the garlic clove, peel it, and add to blender. Add one tsp of salt to blender. Add tomatoes to blender when they are finished boiling, and blend until a salsa is formed. Then enjoy!

Pastel Azteca

To prepare the Pastel Azteca, first prepare the green salsa according to the instructions above. Also, cook the chicken and debone it (I usually do this the night before at my house). Shred the chicken into small pieces. Also, shred the Oaxacan cheese into small pieces (sometimes we use two packages of cheese to make it really gooey). Then heat the tortillas and keep them in a dishtowel to keep them warm. Starting with the tortillas, layer the ingredients into a rectangular casserole dish. After tortillas, spoon in two tablespoons of Mexican cream and spread it over all the tortillas. Then pour in salsa, then add chicken, then cheese. Then add another layer of tortillas and begin the process again. Three or four layers should fit into the dish. Be sure to save salsa to drizzle on the top so that the top layer will not dry out. Let the casserole sit covered in the refrigerator overnight. Then before class preheat the oven to 350° and heat the casserole for 45 minutes or until warm in the center. During class, serve and enjoy!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Huichol Indians and Yarn Art

- * http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/huichol/huicholindex.html
- * Art of the Huichol Indians, by Llowell John Bean and Sylvia Bakke Vane
- * Art Matters: Strategies, Ideas, and Activities to Strengthen Learning Across the Curriculum, by Eilleen S. Pring

Guadalupe Posada and Stamping

- * http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/posada_jose_guadalupe.html
- * Posada's Mexican Prints, by Guadalupe Posada

Talavera and Tile Painting

- * <http://www.inside-mexico.com/art1.htm>
- * Mexican Tiles: Color, Style, Design, by Masako Takahashi and Tony Cohan

Mexican Cooking and Recipes

- * <http://mexicanfood.about.com/>
- * From My Mexican Kitchen: Techniques and Ingredients, by Diana Kennedy
- * The Art of Mexican Cooking, by Diana Kennedy