



CINCO DE MAYO

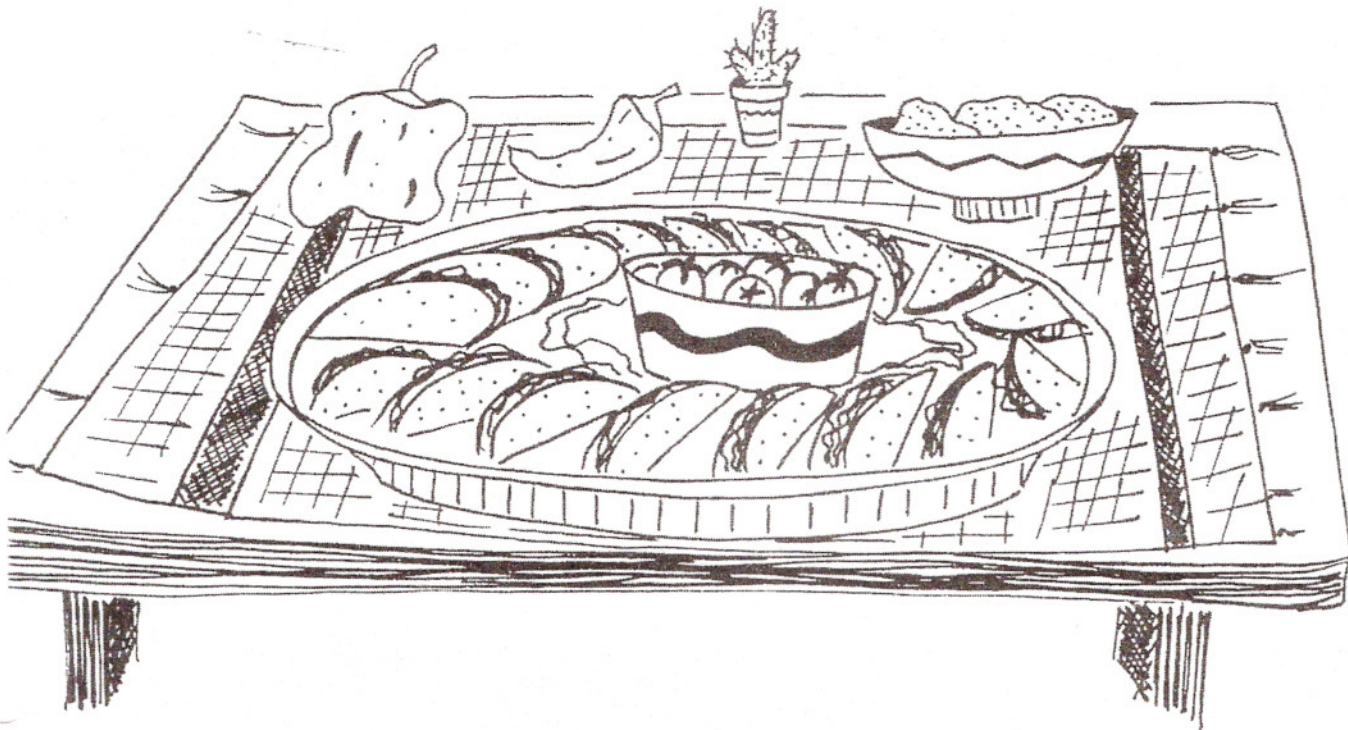


May 5

In 1861, Napoleon, the emperor of France, wanting to rule Mexico, sent Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian to Mexico to serve as its emperor. The Mexicans wanted their freedom, not a ruler from France. Discontent built until, at last, on May 5, the Mexican general, Zaragoza, led a revolt against Maximilian and the French. He defeated the French in Puebla in the battle by that name. It wasn't a huge victory, but it was symbolic of what was to come. Five years later, the French were driven out and Mexico was at last free.

Every year on May 5, a mock battle takes place in Puebla to relive and remember the Mexican army for its great victory at the Battle of Puebla. This has turned into a great drama that includes uniforms, theater in the round, and half a day of exhausting acting. Interestingly, there was, at the same time as the Battle of Puebla, a small Aztec battle fought nearby. The Aztec recreate their battle in theater yearly as well.

Cinco de Mayo has become a big Mexican holiday in some parts of the United States. Americans hold parades, break piñatas, have fireworks displays, and sponsor fiestas that feature Mexican food.





CINCO DE MAYO FIESTA

Sponsor a Cinco de Mayo fiesta in your classroom. The following ideas will help make this special holiday celebration come alive for the children.

CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

CINCO DE MAYO BATTLE

Share the book *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* by Frances Toor with the children. (See the bibliography on pages 239-240.) Toor tells of the Cinco de Mayo event so thoroughly that you and your class will be able to easily write and present your own interpretations of the battle.

LA COCINA CHIQUITA DE PUEBLA (LITTLE PUEBLA KITCHEN)

In Puebla, a tradition for Cinco de Mayo is to make little clay replicas of Puebla kitchens. These are made by the dozens. Invite the children to make miniature Puebla kitchens. Boxes or gourds make great kitchen walls and dishes and utensils may be fashioned from baker's clay or chicle (see pages 82 and 39-40). Suggest that children make plates, cups, dishes, and food pieces, too. Miniature tea sets are also very popular in Mexico and Central America. Furniture may be carved from balsa wood and glued together with white glue as well.

