

Latinx & Hispanic

Focus: Mexico

About the Culture

- “Latino”, “Latinx” and, “Hispanic” are interchangeable pan-ethnic terms used for describing populations of people living in the US of that ethnic background.¹
- Consists of over 30 countries in Central America, South America, and Puerto Rico that are all categorized as “Latin America”.¹
- Those who identify as Hispanic commonly describe themselves by their family’s country of origin.¹
- About 13% of Washington residents identify as Latino and/or Hispanic.²
- 62% of US residents who identify as Hispanic/Latino immigrated from or trace their family heritage to Mexico.³



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Eating Customs and Traditions

- Mexican-American diets consist of a variety of foods that blending influences from pre-Columbian, indigenous Native communities, Spanish, French, and American cultures.⁴
- Traditionally 4 to 5 meals throughout the day are consumed, but have been adapted to American three-meal a day pattern:⁴
 - ▶ **Breakfast (desayuno)**—sweet rolls (pan dulce), coffee, tortilla and beans, eggs (huevos rancheros)
 - ▶ **Lunch (comida)**—typically largest meal of the day, eaten in early afternoon (between 1pm to 3pm)
 - ▶ **Dinner (cena)**—light meal eaten in late evening (after 9pm)
- Familismo, value and reliance on family, is the most important connection for Hispanic communities.⁴
- Families and social networks cook and eat together to stay connected and pass on traditional recipes.
- Males are typically the leaders of the family while females run the household, shop, and prepare foods.⁴
- Religion is important and the most commonly practiced religions among Mexican-Americans are Roman Catholic and Protestant Evangelical Christian.⁴ Religion can have an impact on common dietary patterns.⁴

Cultural Ingredients

- Traditional ingredients reflect what is available locally and can differ based on location.⁴
- Most common ingredients: grains, legumes, and regional vegetables⁵
- Common protein sources: pork, turkey, beef, and poultry⁶
- Spicy foods are common with over 90 varieties of chilies used throughout Mexican cuisine.⁴
 - ▶ Chiles can be found in most US grocery stores fresh, dried, or canned in water or oil.

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Adapting SNAP-Ed Curriculum to Reflect Dietary Patterns

- Ask open ended questions to identify country of origin and potential differences in dietary practices.
- Emphasize family and/or social meals to potentially increase fruit and vegetable intake and variety within diet if necessary, especially among children.⁷
- Promote consumption of low-fat dairy, vegetables, and fruit.⁸
- Recommend cooking methods lower in saturated fats including baking and toasting.⁴
- Emphasize consumption of water instead of sugar sweetened beverages.⁶
- Promote traditional foods, especially complex carbohydrates such as rice and beans.

RECIPE RESOURCES

WA Live Well SNAP-Ed participant website:

<https://wasnap-ed.org/live-well/recipes/?cat=41>

Multicultural Child Care Recipes from Latin America:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/multicultural-child-care-recipes-central-and-south-america>

CalFresh Latino Recipes:

<https://eatfresh.org/find-a-recipe/cuisine/latino>

MyPlate Inspired Meals from Mexico:

<https://eatsmartmovemoreva.org/myplate-inspired-meals-from-mexico/>

POPULAR FOODS	DESCRIPTION, SEASON, AND STORAGE	COMMONLY AVAILABLE FORMS AND SUBSTITUTIONS
Amaranth (Amaranto)	Pseudocereal grain available in seed and flour forms Shelf life: 4 month	Substitute with: Quinoa, buckwheat or chia seed
Cactus (Nopales)	Paddle-shaped leaves of prickly pear cactus Available all year, best during spring—late fall Store in bowl of water in refrigerator up to 1 week	Canned in water (strips) Frozen (whole or strips) Powdered Substitute with: asparagus or green beans
Jicama	Part of the bean family, the root is commonly eaten and similar to tubers (i.e. potatoes). Available all year, best during October to March Store whole at room temperature for 1 week or in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Store peeled and chopped in water in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.	Fresh (sliced in sticks and packaged) Substitute with: water chestnuts, sunchokes, or daikon
Papaya	Tropical fruit with yellowish inedible skin, edible orange flesh and edible black seeds. Available all year, best during May to September Store whole in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 1 week Store cut papaya in an airtight container for up to 5 days or packed in simple syrup for up to 10 months.	Frozen (cubes or puree) Dried (cubes or strips) Juice (no-sugar added) Canned (in juice) Substitute with: cantaloupe or mango
Quelites	Edible wild herbs that grow near other crops or water sources. Common varieties: epazote, white amaranth, and squash blossoms Availability varies based on type Store wrapped in a damp paper towel in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.	Dried Substitute with: watercress, dandelion greens, or cilantro

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References

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