

Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. The celebration started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded



by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30 day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15.

The celebration starts in the middle of the month, September 15th, because it marks the independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. All declared independence in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on September 16th, 18th

and 21st, respectively. Today, over 57 million people or 18% of the American population are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

Some famous Hispanic Americans include former astronaut and the current Director of the Johnson Space Center Ellen Ochoa, baseball star Alex Rodriguez, comedian and TV star George Lopez, Senator Marco Rubio and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The Library of Congress has compiled guides to commemorative observations, including a comprehensive inventory of the Public Laws, Presidential Proclamations and congressional resolutions related to Hispanic American Heritage Month. To access these resources or for more information about the United Nations and International Youth Day go to <https://hispanicheritagemoth.gov>.

For resources in Spanish go to ¡Colorín Colorado! at <http://www.colorincolorado.org/es/libros-autores/celebraciones-y-d%C3%ADas-festivos/hispanic-heritage-month>

Newspaper Activities :

Use your newspaper to make note of Hispanic individuals or groups who are making news today. Choose one and research more about why this person or group is newsworthy.

Read your newspaper regularly and throughout the school year and look for other cultural celebrations. Save each celebration article in a folder. Organize the articles by cultures and dates that the celebration takes place. Compare these cultural celebrations. How are they similar and how are they different?

Consider reading your news in Spanish. Many digital newspapers have language translation available or try <http://www.spanishdict.com/translation>

This feature about Hispanic Heritage Month was made possible because of community support for this newspaper's Newspaper in Education program. Thank you to all who contributed.