

Field Trip Study Guide

Mexico is a colorful country inhabited for centuries by ancient civilizations. Since the arrival of the Spanish, the country has blended ancient ritual with European tradition, and the present day nation reflects the combination of those two influences. This mixture of pre-Colombian and Hispanic tradition is quite evident in the variety of folk art and crafts, still being produced in Mexico.

The furnishings, decorations, crafts and folk art displayed throughout Margaritas restaurants are produced by craft families or in small workshops. The images seen during the DVD presentation capture many facets of daily life in present day Mexico. Much activity in Mexico takes place in the street, mobile vendors peddling their wares, open air markets and taco stands are common. Behind unassuming doors are small workshops and family run factories that produce products that are distributed world wide. Mexican people are an enterprising and productive people, they are hard working and family oriented.



Due to the close proximity to the United States, Mexican culture has drifted north and influenced our own society and culture. By far, the most recognizable contribution is Mexican food. Piñatas now provide many birthday celebrations with lively participation. Mariachis, sombreros even tortilla chips have become synonymous with fun and fiestas. We have designed this program to reveal the Mexico that we interact with every day. Everything you see, we import from Mexico; everything you taste, we prepare daily from fresh ingredients. You'll discover that going to Margaritas restaurant is as close as you can get to Mexico without getting on a plane!

Field Trip Activities

- 1) This program is designed for junior high and high school students and begins with a DVD presentation of scenes from workshops, markets, plazas and ancient ruins in Mexico. This gives students the chance to see the Mexico that we travel to. The coordinators explain the activities of craftsmen and describe daily life in Mexico.
- 2) Students are led on a tour of the restaurant which houses a variety of folk art and furnishings. Students see the products that were presented earlier in the DVD presentation.
- 3) One of our cooks demonstrates how to make guacamole and salsa casera. The students watch the step by step process in preparing these two popular Mexican side dishes.
- 4) Each student has the choice of a chicken, beef, or cheese enchilada, a side order of refried beans, Mexican rice and soda. Fried ice cream is for dessert. This gives the students an opportunity to taste typical meal that a family in Mexico may eat.
- 5) Finally we present a gift for your class. You will receive a piece of authentic Mexican folk art to display in your classroom to provide you with a visual reminder of your trip to Margaritas and Mexico.

DVD Content-Chapters

The following chapters will be presented to students during the DVD presentation. The chapters reveal the activities in workshops, markets and places we visit each year in Mexico.

STREET SCENES- The majority of the scenes in this chapter were taken in the city of Tlaquepaque, which is located near Guadalajara. Tlaquepaque is a vibrant city of 100,000 inhabitants. Many families in the area are still involved in the production of folk art. In addition to family workshops, small factories produce hand made tiles, blown glass and furniture along with a variety of decorative ceramics. In the center of the plaza is a building called El Parian. In the center of El Parian is a stage where folk dancers and mariachis perform to diners sitting in surrounding restaurants. The colors and interior design of our restaurants are influenced by this classic Mexican town.



- How do the streets of Tlaquepaque compare to the streets where you live?
- Many individuals sell products in the street. Name some of the items for sale.
- How does the architecture and climate compare to our own?

TILES- The very name of Tlaquepaque (land of abundant clay) indicates a presence of clay minerals needed to support ceramic production. Every aspect of the production of clay tiles is performed by hand. These hand painted tiles are used throughout Mexico and provide a colorful detail to many homes and buildings in Mexico. The glaze style known as Talavera, was brought to Mexico by the Spanish. Our table tops and walls feature this style of tile.



- Notice how much of the work is done by hand. What are the advantages/disadvantages of such intense manual labor?
- Clay is one of the earliest mediums used in sculpture and architecture, list some other examples of ceramic items that are used in Mexican daily life.
- Why do you think the tradition and production of ceramic tile has lasted so long?

BLOWN GLASS- The colorful glass candles and water glasses that we use at Margaritas are all made by hand at a small glass factory in Mexico. The craftsmen melt recycled glass and form a variety of shapes while the molten glass is pliable. The artisans must work quickly as the glass hardens once it is exposed to air. The blown glass items are used in many households in Mexico especially during fiestas.



- What is the advantage of using recycled glass instead of raw silica/glass material?
- Many people work on the same glassware, how is this beneficial to the worker?
- Have you seen this kind of glassware in the United States, what kind of stores, galleries?

FURNITURE- Margaritas works with many chair workshops and factories. All the chairs are hand made, and carved by skilled artisans. The furniture that we purchase from Mexico represents various styles from influences brought by Spain, latched wood *equipales* from the Gaudalajara area and brightly painted folk art creations. Often the factories are small workshops that employ between 15-50 employees.



- Wood is scarce in Mexico, many hardwoods must be imported. How do trade agreements affect countries' resources?
- What might the benefits of working in a small factory or workshop?
- Why is such a labor intensive craft as furniture making an important part of the Mexican economy and traditional culture?

PAPIER MACHE- Papier mache is a readily available material that is used in a lot of decorative craft and traditional folk art. We display sculptures from contemporary craftsmen located in Tlaquepaque, Mexico. The large suns, birds, and lizards found in Margaritas are all made from papier mache. Each item is cast from a mold made from an original clay sculpture.



- What are some obvious reasons for using papier mache as a sculpting medium?
- Can you give some other examples of papier mache folk art from Mexico?
- How would you describe the difference between contemporary craft and folk art?

WAREHOUSE- Everything you see in our restaurants is imported from Mexico. All the various workshops deliver their items to a warehouse in Guadalajara. When we have enough items to fill a 53' tractor trailer we arrange the shipping from Mexico. International trade is complicated and at times controversial, the process involves freight consolidators, customs brokers, border crossings, US Customs Agents, USDA, and trucking companies.



- What are the benefits of importing items from Mexico?
- How else can you find and purchase items from Mexico?
- Why is international trade important and what are some of the reasons for developing and improving international trade?

MARKET- There is no other activity more integral to daily life in Mexico than a trip to the market, *el mercado*. There is an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables all year-round. Most produce is locally grown, on small farms, some tropical fruits are trucked from the coast. Vendors rent stalls and display a variety of items that include fresh produce, dried chili peppers, fresh poultry, bread, tortillas, even piñatas!



- What are the ways that Mexico's climate and social structure contribute to the importance of the town market and market day?
- How is shopping for food different in Mexico from shopping for food in the United States?
- Do we have anything in the United States that resembles a Mexican market?

STREET FOOD- The variety of food available from street vendors is remarkable. You can feed a family an entire chicken enchilada meal, drink from fresh coconuts or have tacos for a midnight snack, all provided on the spot at portable food stands. Once again, Mexico's climate is ideal and the streets provide a hospitable place for a tasty snack or treat produced with fresh local products.



- How does this activity affect the economy of a community, or family?
- What is the closest comparison to street food that we have in the United States?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of eating in the street?

MARIACHIS- Mariachi music is one of the most exciting and enchanting musical ensembles found anywhere in the world. The musicians combine various instruments, contrasting sounds and rhythms to create the heart and soul of Mexican music. The following instruments are played by the musicians: violins, trumpets, guitar, round backed guitar called the *vihuela*, and a 6 stringed bass guitar called the *guitarrón*.



- Where do you think mariachi musicians learn to play music?
- What are some of the occasions that mariachi music would be played?
- How has music contributed to shape and define Mexican culture?

Vocabulario-Vocabulary

Comida- Food	Pintura- Paint
Cocinero- Cook	Herramienta- Tool
Mesero(a)- Waiter/Waitress	Horno- Oven, kiln
Cebolla- Onion	Secar- To dry
Ajo- Garlic	Talavera- Ceramic glaze style
Tomate- Tomato	Fabrica- Factory
Cilantro- Coriander	Taller- Workshop
Jugo de Limón- Lime Juice	Obrero- Worker
Aguacate- Avocado	Acrilico- Acrylic
Aceite Comestible- Vegetable Oil	Molde- Mold
Mercado- Market	Yeso- Plaster of Paris
Puesto- Market stand	Papel Mache- Papier Mâché
Tortillaria- Tortilla stand, factory	Bodega- Warehouse
Pollo- Chicken	Camión- Truck, Flete
Carne de Res- Beef	La Frontera- Border
Carne de Puerco- Pork	Reja- Shipping Crate
Mesa- Table	Loma- Hill
Silla- Chair	Montaña- Mountain
Artesania- Folk Art	Museo- Museum
Artesano- Craftsman	Musico- Musician
Muebles- Furniture	Guitara- Guitar
Vidrio Soplado- Blown Glass	Guitarrón- Large guitar
Azulejos- Ceramic Tiles	Trompeta- Trumpet
Barro- Clay	Violín- Violin
Madera- Wood	Vihuela- Round backed guitar

Margaritas Restaurant Student Worksheet

Nombre _____

Fecha _____

Write down your answers in Spanish.

1) What are the names of the people you met at Margaritas? Cocinero, gerente, mesero, coordinador etc.

2) Describe 3 pieces of Mexican Art from the interior of the restaurant. USE DETAIL
(#1)

(#2)

(#3)

3) Write down some of the ingredients used in Mexican Cooking

4) What did you eat?

5) What else did you learn?



