

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage!

A formal recognition of Hispanic Heritage was first declared by the U.S. Congress in 1968, to celebrate a combination of several Latin American countries' Independence Day holidays:

In 1988, the celebration was extended to a full month. It now includes Columbus Day on October 12th, and Día de la Raza - commemorating the first immigration of Hispanics to the Americas. Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15th - October 15th.

September 15	September 16	September 18	October 12
Costa Rica El Salvador Guatemala Nicaragua	Mexico	Chile	Columbus Day

With so many countries sharing the same holiday, it can be quite confusing to answer the question, who is Hispanic?

The word 'Hispanic' is actually a cultural or ethnic term. There is no single Hispanic nationality. Hispanics come from many races. Hispanic bloodlines include Mayan, Aztec, Spanish, Mexican, and many others. The Hispanic classification draws from more than 20 nations!

The United States Census Bureau classifies Hispanics as Americans who trace their ancestry to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America, the Dominican Republic and other Spanish cultures, regardless of race. The Bureau excludes people from countries where Spanish is not the primary language spoken--such as Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad, Belize and Portugal.

Latinos, Chicanos and Hispaños are among the many groups of Hispanic peoples living in the United States. The term Hispanic was created by the US Government to bring together a large and varied population. There are Indo-Hispanics and Afro-Hispanics, Cuban-Americans and Mexican-Americans, to name but a few. Some of the recognized group names in use today are:

- **Hispanic** - used by Cubans, Puerto Ricans and other Caribbean people who consider their cultural heritage linked to Spain.
- **Latino** (Latina for women) - used by descendants of Latin America (Mexico, Central America, and South America).
- **Chicano** (Chicana for women) - used by people of Mexican ancestry wishing to distinguish their heritage from those of other Latin American countries. The term Mexican-American is becoming a popular replacement.

Hispaño (Hispaña for women) - used by the direct descendants of Spanish conquistadors and other Spanish settlers of the US southwest (who did not immigrate from Latin America). from Spanish rule.

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