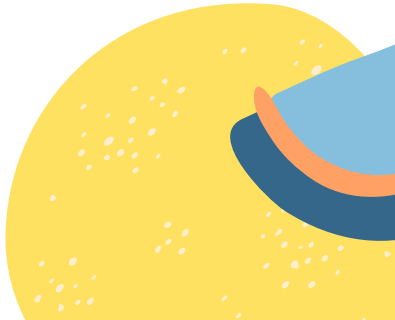
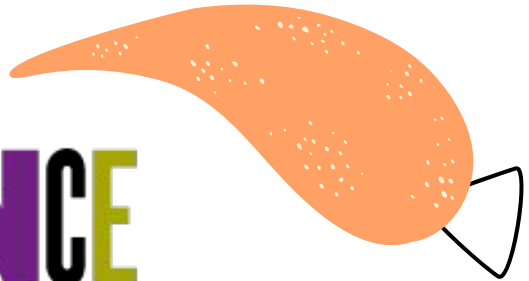
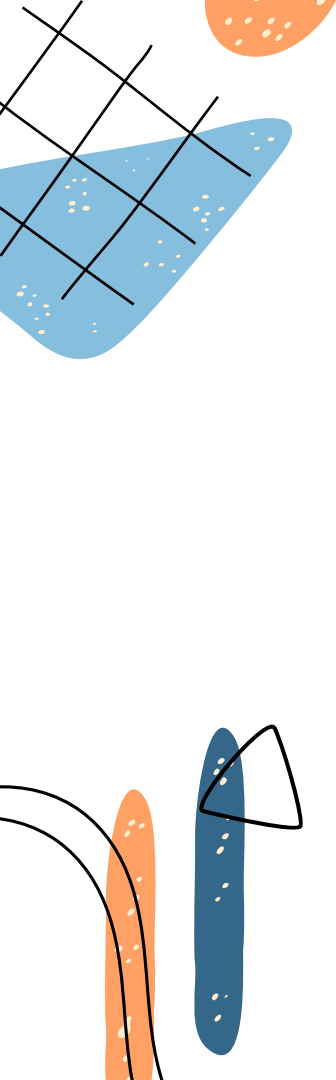




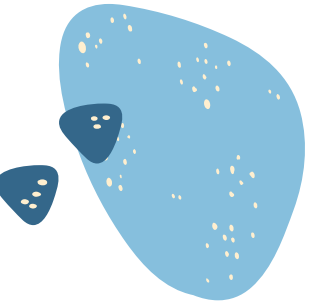
**PERFORMANCE
PLAYGROUND**

Dancing Through Mexico's History

Let's Learn About
Mexican Cultural Heritage



What to expect



What is Ballet Folklórico?

Who are the Aztecs?

Aztec Religion and Mythology

Instruments in Aztec Dance

Traditional Dress

The Aguila Blanca

La Revolución and Soldaderas

Visual Arts & Performing Arts

WHAT IS BALLEF FOLKLÓRICO?

Mexican **Ballet Folklórico**, or folkloric dance, is a collection of regional dances that express a variety of ethnic groups within the culture of Mexico.

Many dances tell stories that have been passed down generation to generation.



WHAT IS BALLET FOLKLÓRICO?

There are many diverse forms of **dance** in Mexico because there are **many different cultures** across the nation.

So, no single dance form is representative of Mexico.



WHAT IS BALLET FOLKLÓRICO

These dances are complex and require many years to master.

Today, we are focusing specifically on **Aztec Dance**.



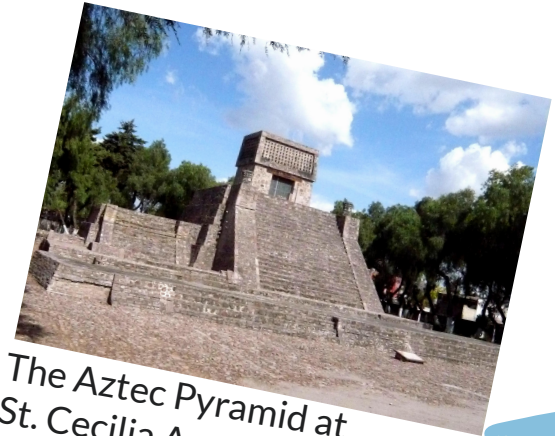
WHO ARE THE AZTECS?

The **Aztec** people were a vibrant civilization in central Mexico from 1300 to 1521.

They had advanced agriculture and architecture. You can visit their elaborate pyramids today. **Visual art**, **music**, and **dance** were celebrated at all levels of Aztec life.



The Aztec Empire

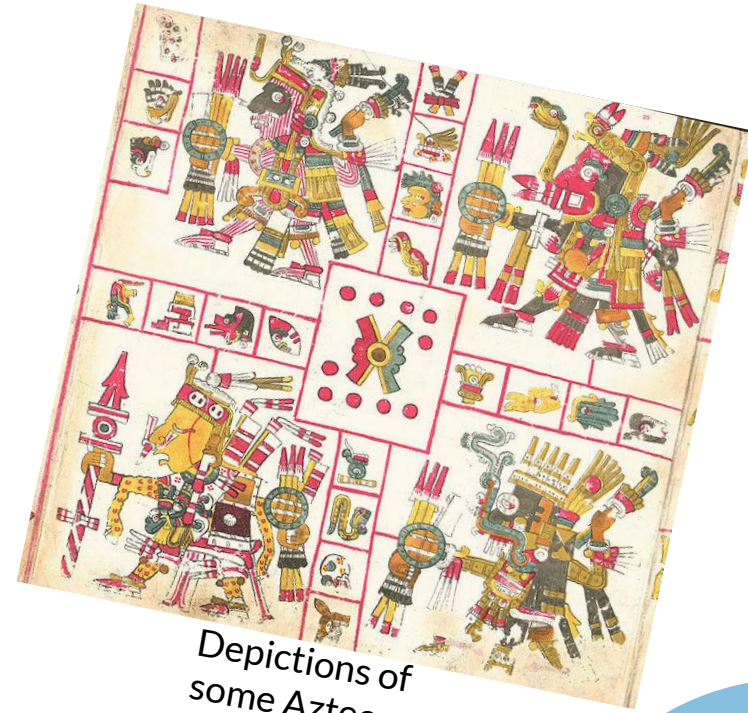


The Aztec Pyramid at St. Cecilia Acatitlan

AZTEC RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY

The religion of the **Aztec** people was based around gods who controlled the **elements**: earth, water, sky, fire; as well as night, day and death.

Their spiritual connection to **nature**, resulted in myths explaining things like the creation of life and how the sun appeared each day.

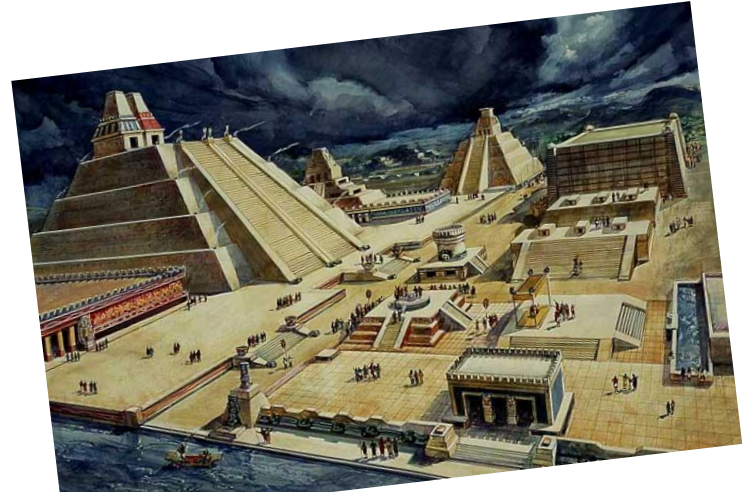


Depictions of
some Aztec gods

AZTEC RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY

One Aztec god is **Huitzilopochtli** (which translated means left-handed hummingbird).

This god guided the early Aztecs to the location where they built the city **Tenochtitlán**.



AZTEC RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY

The city **Tenochtitlán** was built on an island where the Aztecs saw an **eagle** perched on a **nopal cactus** holding a **rattlesnake** in its talons. This is pictured on the flag of Mexico.

This location is now the center of **Mexico City**.



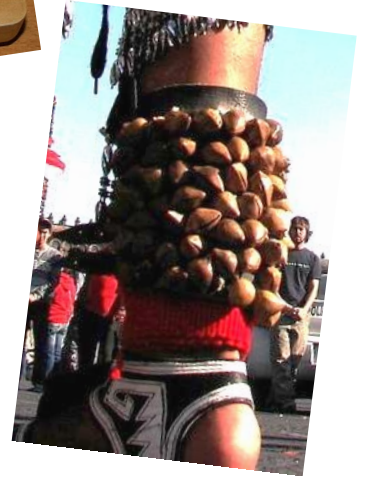
INSTRUMENTS IN AZTEC DANCE

Azteca dance uses traditional percussion instruments:

Sonaja - a shaker

Ayoyotes - a cloth filled with seed husks, tied to the ankles and wrists

Huehuetl - a drum made from a tree trunk.



TRADITIONAL DRESS

Men wear a type of loincloth called the **maxtlatl**.

Women wear **decorative skirts or tunics**.

All dancers wear a headdress called a **penancho**. *See worksheets.*

When wearing traditional Aztec costume, it is important to respect the history and the heritage of the Aztecs.



THE AGUILA BLANCA

The **Aguila Blanca**, or White Eagle, is a traditional dance that has been in existence for over **500 years**.

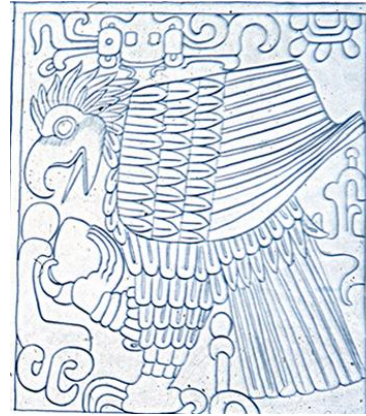
This dance tells a story of the ongoing battle between the **white eagle** and the jaguar.



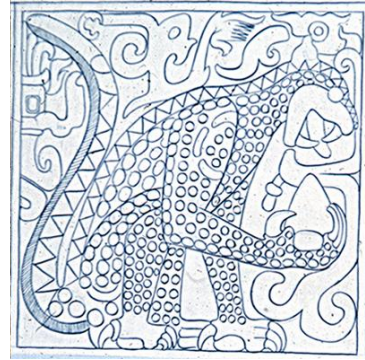
THE AGUILA BLANCA

The eagle symbolizes **day**.
The jaguar represents **night**.

In their constant battle,
when the eagle is winning,
it is day. When the jaguar
wins, it's nighttime.



An Aztec Eagle



An Aztec Jaguar

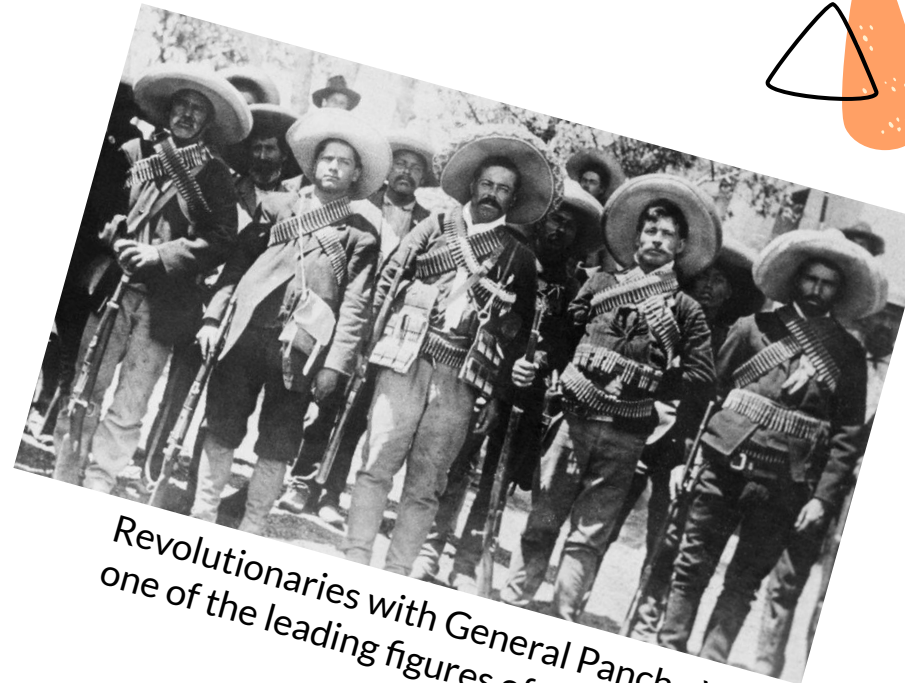


Aztec warriors
dressed as the
Eagle and Jaguar

LA REVOLUCIÓN

La Revolución is a more modern Mexican dance that draws on the history traditional Aztec dances.

This dance commemorates the **Mexican Revolution** that lasted roughly from 1910 to 1920 and transformed Mexican culture and government.



Revolutionaries with General Pancho Villa, one of the leading figures of the Revolution.



LA REVOLUCIÓN

This dance is a polka, and it is often performed with the song **Jesusita en Chihuahua**.

The song is about **soldaderas**, women who tended to the meals and wounds of the revolutionaries.

Soldaderas even joined in combat to fight for Mexico's freedom!

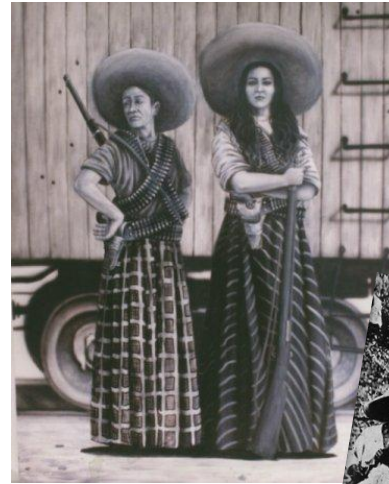


Illustration of soldaderas



Soldaderas as nurses



Soldaderas with Revolutionaries

LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

On the next slides, dancers from **El Ballet Folklórico Estudiantil** show you how to perform **La Revolución!**

Step 1:



LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

Step 2:



LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

Step 3:



LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

Step 4:



LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

Step 5:



LET'S DANCE LA REVOLUCIÓN!

Step 5 *with Hand Placement:*



LA REVOLUCIÓN!



Watch how all of the steps come together!

See how the dancers wear traditional Mexican dress with **serapes** (ponchos), **sombreros** (hats), and flowing **Jalisco dresses**.

VISUAL ART & PERFORMING ARTS

Aztec dance and Ballet Folklórico are very vibrant art forms that have inspired **visual artists** for centuries.

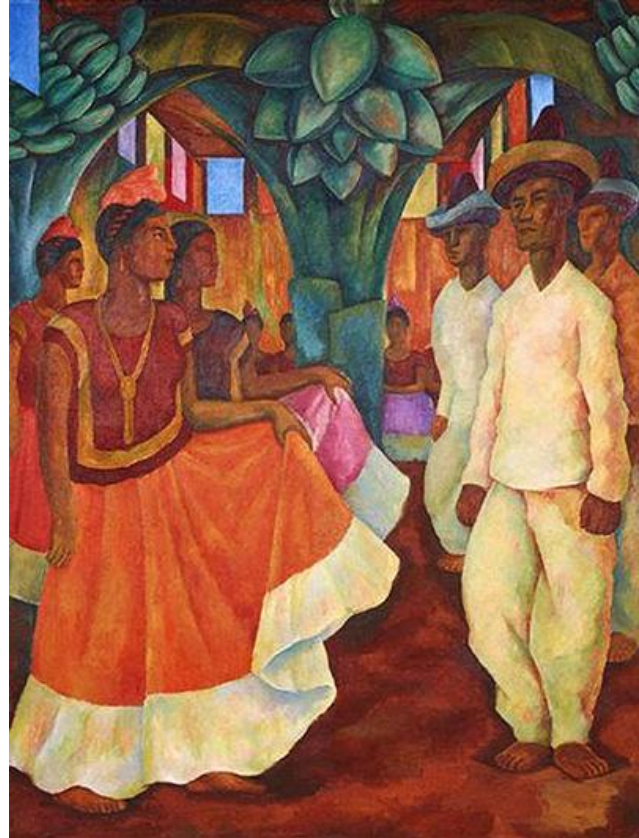
When the Spanish invaded Mexico, they were amazed by the culture. This image of Aztec Dance is from *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, published in 1581.



VISUAL ART & PERFORMING ARTS

Famous Mexican painter **Diego Rivera** captured Ballet Folklórico in his style, too. The painting shown here is *Dance in Tehuantepec*.

Rivera is well known for the murals he painted all around the world. One of his largest murals fills an entire room in the Detroit Institute of the Arts!



VISUAL ART & PERFORMING ARTS

Visual arts are not confined to painting and sculpture, either. Ballet Folklórico features intricately embroidered **costuming**, typically crafted by highly-skilled women.

The details in every stitch are both beautiful and an expression of generations of tradition.





Learn how to do more
dances with online classes
available through
**El Ballet Folklórico
Estudiantil.**

Slides written and organized by **Will Biby**
in collaboration with **Hannah Nettleton**
and **Sue Quintanilla** of the **El Ballet**
Folklórico Estudiantil.

