



## INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Forget the same old, same old! Introduce your child and the other kids to another culture by planning a Mexican-inspired birthday party.

It's an especially fun theme if your child's birthday falls around Cinco de Mayo (May 5th), when Mexicans celebrate their country's independence from Spain. You can read up on Mexican traditions online or at the library to help plan your party.

The most important components are colorful decorations, tasty Mexican fare, and a piñata full of trinkets and treats.

Weather permitting, plan your fiesta for outdoors where kids will have plenty of room to dance and play.

Create a **Mexican Flag Invitation**. Using green, red, and white cardstock, make a Mexican flag on one side of your invitation and on the reverse write the fiesta party details. Alternatively, if you want to hand-deliver your party invitations, purchase small Mexican flags and attach a small card with the party details written on it to the wooden stick.

## DECORATIONS

Decorating for your fête is easy: just think bright colors, cacti, and chili peppers when it comes to your paper plates, cups, and napkins.

Use the colors of the Mexican flag for your party colors: white, green, and red. Blow up balloons, hang streamers, and buy tableware in these vibrant shades.

Add bunches of bright-colored flowers (tissue paper flowers work well too), sombreros, piñatas, and maracas for additional festive touches.

Place a large sombrero hat in the center of your party table and fill it with a party snack for a festive serving bowl.

Use dried beans, strands of raffia, and tissue paper flowers as confetti on your party table.



Hang a string of chili red lights around the front entrance door to your party.

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Welcome your young guests with a heartfelt "Hola!" (Hello) or "Buenos dias!" (Good day) as they arrive. Get them in the mood for a fiesta by outfitting each child with a sombrero to wear at the party and take home as a party favor at the end of the day.

Decorate Plastic Maracas or make your own by filling plastic bottles with different beans.

Decorate Foam Visors with pom poms, jewels, and feathers.

**Wooden Spoon/Bean Relay Race.** Divide the kids into two teams. Have each team take turns carrying a dried bean on a spoon to a bowl without dropping it. The first team done wins!

**Tortilla Chip Toss.** Provide the kids with three chips to throw through a hanging hula hoop.

**Bean Fortune Telling Session.** Have the kids take a small handful of beans, then count them out according to the old rhyme Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief. Whatever word they run out of beans on is the person they will marry, when they will marry, in what clothes, and how they will be transported to their wedding.

**Bean Transfer.** Divide the kids into teams of two and give them five beans, two bowls, and two knitting needles. Have them transfer the beans from one bowl to the other by using the pointy end of the knitting needles.

Hold a Mexican Taste Test for the kids using ingredients such as lime juice, salsa, chopped tomato, cilantro, beans, sour cream, shredded cheese, bean dip, etc.

### Piñata

What's a Mexican fiesta without a piñata? Nada! A piñata can be the main event at your party. Piñatas are available in all different shapes and sizes—from a sombrero or cactus to a favorite character such as Dora the Explorer, Clifford the Big Red Dog, or Barbie. Some piñatas come filled with candy and trinkets; others will need to be filled by you before the festivities start.

A piñata is best played with outside where there's plenty of room. An adult should always supervise. Before the party starts, hang the piñata from a sturdy tree branch. When it's time to crack it open, have the kids form a line to take their turn. The child whose turn it is can be blindfolded, given a plastic bat, and led to the spot from which he or she will hit the piñata.



## Party Theme Planning From **BIRTHDAYS**

Give each child three hits before removing the blindfold and having him or her pass the bat to the next child. Children who've already taken their turn or who are waiting for their chance should stand at a safe distance from the piñata.

If the idea of kids swinging a plastic bat makes you nervous, you can opt for a pull-apart piñata. How it works: rows of strings hang from the bottom of the piñata, with one rigged to open it. Have each child take a turn pulling a string. One child's tug will split it open.

### Cap Your Fiesta with a Hat Dance

Put on some Latin music and have your guests dance. Hand out maracas and let the kids shake them. Young children will get a kick out of this noisy fun! A great and easy group dance you can try is the Mexican Hat Dance. Simply place a large sombrero on the ground, crank up the music (toy and party stores often sell tapes or CDs of the music to the Mexican Hat Dance) and let the kids circle around the hat while they clap to the beat. Olé!

### PARTY MENU

#### Make-Your-Own Fiesta Food

A south-of-the-border feast is sure to please a crowd of hungry children since many Mexican options are kids' favorites. Start with chips and salsa or guacamole. For heartier fare, also serve chili and a fresh salad with plenty of colorful veggies like cucumbers, shaved carrots, and green and red peppers. Consider making both chili con carne (with meat) and a vegetarian version for non-meat eaters.

Finally, lay out the fixings for a make-your-own taco station and let your guests customize their lunch to their liking.

You will need:

- Taco shells
- Cooked and seasoned ground beef (look for Mexican seasoning packets at the grocery store)
- Shredded cheese like cheddar or Monterey Jack
- Shredded lettuce
- Sour cream
- Guacamole

For dessert, serve a platter of sliced fresh fruit and a birthday cake. Need inspiration for your cake? Consider using a cactus-shaped pan and green icing, or turning a regular rectangular cake into a Mexican flag by icing the left third of the cake in green, the center in white and the right third in red.



For more great birthday party planning tips and advice online, visit [www.birthdaysrus.com](http://www.birthdaysrus.com). For the best party supplies and gifts go to [www.toysrus.com](http://www.toysrus.com), or shop at a Toys"R" Us store near you.

Contact Us: 1-800-TOYSRUS  
© 2008 Geoffrey, LLC. All Rights Reserved

### PARTY FAVORS

The party guests can take home their sombreros filled with the maracas and sun visors they made, as well as other small fiesta items.

Remember to take pictures during your fiesta party of the kids dancing together or striking the piñata, and send these pictures in your gracias notes.



For more great birthday party planning tips and advice online, visit [www.birthdaysrus.com](http://www.birthdaysrus.com). For the best party supplies and gifts go to [www.toysrus.com](http://www.toysrus.com), or shop at a Toys"R" Us store near you.

Contact Us: 1-800-TOYSRUS  
© 2008 Geoffrey, LLC. All Rights Reserved