

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Story of Cinco de Mayo

Many people get two holidays mixed up. They think Cinco de Mayo is Mexico's Independence Day, but that is actually a different holiday in September! Cinco de Mayo is a special day that remembers a very brave moment in Mexico's history called the Battle of Puebla.

About 160 years ago, Mexico was having a hard time. The country owed money to other places, including France. The leader of France, Napoleon III, decided to send a huge, powerful army to Mexico. He didn't just want the money; he wanted to take over and start a new empire!

The French army was famous for being one of the best in the world. They had thousands of soldiers with the newest weapons. Mexico's army was much smaller, and many of the men weren't professional soldiers—they were regular people who wanted to protect their homes.

The French army marched toward a city called Puebla. To get into the city, they had to go past two big stone forts on top of a hill. A brave leader named General Ignacio Zaragoza told his Mexican soldiers to stand their ground.

Even though the French had more men, the Mexican soldiers had a secret weapon: they knew the land. On the day of the battle, it started to rain, making the ground very muddy. The French soldiers struggled to climb the slippery hill. The Mexican army worked together and fought so hard that the French eventually had to turn around and march away! It was a giant surprise to the whole world.

Winning the battle didn't end the whole war, but it showed everyone that the Mexican people were incredibly brave. It gave them hope and pride to know they could stand up to a powerful army.

Today, Cinco de Mayo is a huge celebration of Mexican culture and heritage. It is very popular in the United States! People celebrate with:

- **Bright Decorations:** You might see papel picado, which are colorful paper banners with beautiful designs cut into them.
- **Music and Dance:** People listen to Mariachi bands and watch "Baile Folklórico," where dancers wear giant, swirling dresses.
- **Delicious Food:** Families gather to eat tasty dishes like tacos, guacamole, and mole (a special sauce made with chocolate and peppers).

It is a day to be happy, enjoy great food, and remember that even a small group of people can do amazing things when they work together!



Cinco de Mayo celebration

1. Why did the French army go to Mexico in 1862?

- a) Mexico owed money to France
- b) France wanted to give Mexico a gift
- c) To celebrate Mexico's independence
- d) To help Mexico build new roads

2. In which city did the famous battle take place?

- a) Mexico City
- b) Puebla
- c) Cancun
- d) Paris

3. What made it hard for the French soldiers to climb the hill during the battle?

- a) It was too hot outside
- b) There were no paths to follow
- c) The ground was muddy from the rain
- d) They were wearing heavy winter coats

4. What does Cinco de Mayo celebrate in the United States today?

- a) A victory over Spain
- b) The end of a rainy season
- c) Mexican culture and heritage
- d) The discovery of chocolate

5. On what date did the Battle of Puebla take place?

- a) September 16, 1810
- b) December 25, 1900
- c) July 4, 1776
- d) May 5, 1862