



Excursion Guide

Mexico

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Read Aloud Folktale, Legend or Myth:

Both stories below are from *Tales Our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection* by F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006):

“The Goat from the Hills and Mountains”: This is the story of a goat who steals food from a garden, and the clever ant who gets rid of him. It includes repetition, humor, and dialogue. Although it is short, there are many interesting characters (family, goat, ant), and lessons on politeness, kindness, and generosity.

“Martina Martinez and Perez the Mouse”: This is a longer selection. This is the story of how Martina wins her love, Raton Perez, only to have him fall into a pot of soup! But don't worry – everything ends well. There is dialogue, humor, and a variety of characters, both animal and human. One possible concern is that the story doesn't make clear whether Martina is an animal or a human, although she converses with both. This doesn't actually matter in the story, but could be confusing for some readers. The presenter needs to decide if this would be a problem for a specific group.

Remember to:

- Greet each person individually
- Use a globe or large map to show each person the starting point and destination
- Engage people in informal conversation
- Include supplemental materials such as music, souvenirs, coloring pages, or food to enhance the program



Five Facts About Mexico

1. El Popocateptl volcano has erupted 14 times in the last 500 years. Its name means “smoking mountain” in the Aztec language, Nahuatl.
2. Mexico is the world’s largest producer of silver. In 2000, Mexico produced over 5 million pounds of silver!
3. Descendants of the Aztec people still live in Mexico today, and continue to speak Nahuatl.
4. The Azteca soccer stadium is the largest in the world. It seats over 100,000 fans.
5. Mexico is home to many beautiful and exotic animals, including monarch butterflies, jaguars, iguanas, and hummingbirds.



Annotated Bibliography

Unless otherwise specified, the non-fiction books listed here have many color photographs and images (but not cartoon-style illustrations); and they do not have an intimidating or distracting amount of text on the page. Although many of the selections are children's books, they are not obviously juvenile in their layout and illustrations.

Top Selections

Aztec, Inca, & Maya by Elizabeth Baquendano (DK Children, 2011): Like all books in this series, the photographs are bright, colorful, and plentiful. The book is engaging and the images, text, and white space are well-balanced. The topics include farming, cities, food, gods, and much more.

Countries of the World: Mexico by Edward Parker (Facts of File, Inc., 2004): This book has many vivid pictures of the land, people, animals, and industry of Mexico. It is at a higher level than the DeAngelis book, and so has more text; but that also means that it covers a broader range of topics and has more photographs. Topics include: landscape, people, daily life, environment, and more.

Mexico: The Culture by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2008): This book contains many beautiful photographs of both ancient and modern Mexican art. It also has sections on dancing, music, cooking, and sports. These topics are covered in only one or two pages in the other books, so this is a good selection for readers who would like to see Mexican culture in more detail and depth.

Mexico: The Land by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2009): Like the companion book (above), this is full of bright and colorful photographs. It showcases the natural environment, ancient and modern buildings, transportation, industry, and more.

Mexico by Gina DeAngelis (2003): This is a relatively short book, but does have large print. The large photographs are mostly of people and of



different settings (city, beach, market). Topics include: seasons, family life, customs, pets, and more.

Rick Bayless: Mexico One Plate at a Time by Rick Bayless (Scribner, 2000): This is the companion book to the PBS series of the same name, which may be familiar to some readers. Perhaps some readers will have even dined in one of his local restaurants. Because it is a cookbook, there is a good deal of text. However, the photographs of the food are quite beautiful, and there are also smaller, black and white photographs of Bayless' travels through Mexico. The graphics are also nice to look at, clearly influenced by pre-Columbian stonework and paintings.

The Yucatan Peninsula by C.C. Lockwood (Louisiana State University Press, 1989): Lockwood is a photographer, and this oversized book is full of glorious images of the nature and animals of Mexico. *Publishers Weekly* writes that his photographs are "stunning" and that this is "a sumptuous book, one that can be enjoyed repeatedly" (<http://www.amazon.com/Yucatan-Peninsula-C-Lockwood/dp/080711524X>). What more can be said?

Alternate Selections

Celebrating a Quinceañera: A Latina's 15th Birthday Celebration by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith (Holiday House, 2002): This traces the story of one woman's quinceañera journey from her childhood through the ceremony. There is more text in this book than in many of the other selections, but it is accompanied by photographs, many which are full-page. The idea of a quinceañera will likely be familiar to many readers, and the photos in this selection may bring back memories of quinceañeras, debutante balls, and weddings. This title is listed as an alternate selection because it might bore readers who are not making these positive associations.

A World of Food: Mexico by Geoff Barker (Clara House Books, 2010): This book includes photographs, maps, and recipes; and discusses the relationships between food and customs, and food and agriculture. It is listed as an alternate selection because this review is based on viewing the book online, and not in person.



Supplemental Materials



Souvenirs: maracas, sombrero, cactus plant, piñata, small Mexican flags



Food: cut up avocado, guacamole, or salsa with chips

Music Suggestions (to search on <http://www.youtube.com> or in your own library's collection): Mexican folk music including Ranchera or Corrido styles; Mariachi ensemble music

Free coloring pages are available on the Internet from helpful resources such as <http://www.coloring.ws> and <http://www.supercoloring.com>. All coloring pages are subject to their own terms of use, separate from the Tales & Travel Creative Commons License. The following links are suggested for this Excursion: Cinco de Mayo (<http://printables4kids.com/cinco-de-mayo-coloring-page/cinco-de-mayo-coloring-page-2/>)