

Makynzie Wagner
July 26, 2023
N432: Culture Report
Professor Kamradt

Mexican culture is a vibrant and diverse tapestry that reflects the country's rich history and fusion of indigenous traditions with Spanish influences. Family plays a central role in Mexican society, and strong family bonds are cherished. Many families gather regularly for meals and celebrations, fostering a sense of unity and support. In terms of prevalence, Mexican culture has a strong presence both within Mexico and in communities worldwide, especially in the United States. Due to historical ties and migration patterns, Mexican culture has significantly influenced the American Southwest and other regions with sizeable Mexican diaspora communities.

Religion holds significant importance in Mexican culture, with most of the population identifying as Roman Catholic. Religious festivals and traditions are widely observed throughout the country, with events like Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) being particularly iconic and celebrated. It's essential to note that while Catholicism plays a dominant role, Mexico is a diverse country with various religious beliefs and practices, including other Christian denominations, indigenous religions, and syncretic traditions that blend indigenous beliefs with Catholicism. As a result, the values mentioned above may also be influenced by other religious and cultural perspectives found within Mexico.

In Mexican culture, traditional healing practices and beliefs have a long and profound history, deeply rooted in a blend of indigenous wisdom and Catholic influences. Curanderismo, the traditional healing system, is significant in providing remedies for various physical and

spiritual ailments. Curanderos and curanderas, healers and herbalists, are respected figures in Mexican communities, believed to possess unique gifts and knowledge passed down through generations (Gordon et al., 2022). They often use a combination of herbal medicine, prayer, and rituals to restore balance and harmony within the body and spirit. Limpias, or spiritual cleansings, are commonly performed to remove negative energies or curses. Many Mexicans also believe in the power of sacred objects, such as amulets and talismans, to protect against illness and bring good fortune. Alongside these traditional practices, Catholicism heavily influences healing beliefs, with many seeking the intercession of saints and the Virgin of Guadalupe for divine healing. Despite modern medical advancements, the traditional healing practices and beliefs of the Mexican culture remain essential to their identity, providing comfort, hope, and cultural continuity.

Mexican cuisine is renowned worldwide, with delicious flavors and ingredients. Tacos, enchiladas, guacamole, and tamales are just a few of the mouthwatering dishes enjoyed by Mexicans and appreciated by people around the globe. In Mexican culture, postpartum is crucial for the new mother's recovery and well-being. Traditional customs and practices are observed to support her healing and provide nourishment. One popular postpartum food in Mexico is "caldo de pollo," or chicken soup. This nutritious broth is often prepared with various vegetables, herbs, and chicken, providing essential vitamins, minerals, and proteins that aid in the mother's recovery and help boost her immune system. The warm and comforting nature of the soup is believed to have a soothing effect on the body after childbirth. Another commonly consumed postpartum dish is "atole," a warm and thick beverage made from masa (corn dough) or rice. Atole is often flavored with cinnamon, vanilla, or chocolate, and it is known for its high nutritional value and ability to promote lactation in breastfeeding mothers. It provides much-

needed energy and hydration, which are essential during postpartum. It is important to note that these traditional postpartum foods vary from region to region in Mexico, and each family may have its own unique recipes and customs.

In Mexican culture, specific core values form the foundation of their rich and diverse society. Faith and spirituality lie at the heart of Mexican life, with a strong belief in a higher power and a profound sense of spirituality permeating their daily interactions. Family and community are paramount, with deep bonds and solidarity prevailing among relatives and neighbors. Respect for tradition and elders is deeply ingrained, and Mexicans take great pride in their cultural heritage, preserving customs and passing down wisdom from one generation to the next. Festivals and rituals, blending indigenous and Catholic elements, play a vital role in bringing communities together to celebrate their shared beliefs (Mutlu, 2022). Compassion and empathy are cherished virtues, encouraging acts of kindness and charity towards others, especially those in need. Humility and devotion are also prevalent, as Mexicans express their faith through prayer, devotion to religious figures like the Virgin of Guadalupe, and pilgrimages to sacred sites. Alongside their resilience is a sense of fatalism, fostering an acceptance of life's challenges and a belief in destiny. These core values, shaped by their historical and cultural background, form the tapestry of Mexican culture, enriching the lives of its people and creating a vibrant and welcoming society.

In Mexican culture, pregnancy and birth are significant life events, celebrated with a blend of traditional and religious customs that reflect the country's rich heritage. Throughout pregnancy, the expecting mother often receives strong support from her extended family and community. Family members and friends frequently come together to organize a baby shower or "baby welcoming" party known as "el baby shower" or "el cuateleo". The mother is showered

with gifts and well wishes for the upcoming birth during this gathering. As the due date approaches, Mexican mothers may seek spiritual protection and blessings through religious practices. During labor, traditional beliefs may come into play. Some families believe in the power of a “comadrona” or traditional midwife, who uses herbal remedies, massages, and supportive rituals to ease labor pain and aid the birthing process. While modern medical care is prevalent in urban areas, some rural communities still embrace these traditional midwifery practices. After childbirth, the postpartum period, known as “cuarentena” or quarantine, is a significant tradition in Mexican culture (Page et al., 2021). This period usually lasts around 40 days, during which the new mother is encouraged to rest, recover, and bond with her baby. Family members and friends often took on domestic responsibilities to support the new mother during this time.

As future nurses, understanding and respecting cultural differences are crucial in providing holistic, patient-centered care. When caring for patients of Mexican descent, being aware of their cultural values, traditions, and family dynamics can positively impact their healthcare experience and outcomes. Mexican patients may value the presence of family members during medical consultations and may prefer traditional remedies alongside medical treatments. Learning about their beliefs and customs can help establish trust and facilitate effective communication between healthcare providers and patients. When caring for Mexican culture patients during pregnancy, it is crucial to approach their healthcare with cultural sensitivity and awareness. Some important things to remember are family-centered care, language and communication barriers, cultural beliefs and practices, traditional healing practices, spiritual and religious considerations, nutritional preferences, herbal remedies, modesty and privacy, postpartum traditions, and community resources.

References

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