

Somos Latinos (We are Latinos/as/x) Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

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Julio Cruz Reyes, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist at *St. Joseph's Health System* in Mishawaka, Indiana shares his love of Latino music. [Watch Here](#)

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by recognizing and celebrating the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture and achievements of the United States. National Hispanic Heritage Month begins on Sept. 15 because it coincides with the national independence days for many Latin American countries. At Trinity Health, a total of 8,600 colleagues identify as Hispanic Americans, the nation's second fastest growing racial or ethnic group after Asian Americans. Join us in celebrating the colorful and fascinating background of Hispanic Americans.

What is distinctive about all Latino culture(s)?

When people say that they “like Latino Culture,” the appreciative comment reveals a basic misconception. There is no one “Latino Culture” but rather a multitude of ethnic, national and cultural identities within the Latino world. Amid that broad diversity, we can identify [these common elements of Latino culture](#):

FAMILY is supremely important across all Latino cultures, with most people having close relationships and frequent, even daily interactions with extended family members. Many Latinos choose to live at home until they marry, and it is common for grandparents or great aunts and uncles to live under the same roof.



HOSPITALITY is a hallmark of Latino households, evidenced by the warm welcome extended to even new friends or casual visitors. A common phrase heard among Latinos is “Mi casa es su casa” which translates “my house is your house.” These are not just words; they reflect a commitment to make others feel welcome.



FOOD is central to setting the atmosphere for sharing social time and fostering friendships. Contrary to popular belief, not all Latino foods are hot and spicy, but nearly all have rice and beans as common staples. No matter what country or culture, food is always plentiful with large servings that leave everyone satisfied.



FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS abound in all Latino cultures, with elaborate displays of flowers and colorful costumes to accompany vibrant music and dancing as part of any festivity. You don't need a specific reason to celebrate; it is enough just to celebrate life and friendships. There is always a party just waiting for an invitation.



Latino Culture in Art

Latinos have greatly influenced the art world and continue to do so today. Their artistic technique and cultural symbols have given rise to political and social change on a local, regional, national and international level as well as inspire national pride. It's been said that Hispanic artists have shaped Western art and culture.

Historically, Hispanic artists have set trends by going outside cultural norms for instance Jean-Michel Basquiat who is responsible for bringing graffiti into the art gallery; and others like Joan Miró and Salvador Dalí who did not limit themselves to art of one particular medium. Some of the most influential Latino artists of our time include: José Clemente Orozco, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Salvador Dalí and Fernando Botero.

Latino Literature

With poetry, fictional and historical novels, personal memoirs and plays, Latinos have made a significant impact on literature regionally and globally. One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Columbia) is one of the earliest bestsellers, which earned him the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature. Isabel Allende is considered the first internationally successful female Latin American (Chilean) journalist and author, having sold over 51 million books in 30 languages.

Common themes include the contentious integration of indigenous and colonial languages and cultures, the emergent voice of women in Latino society, the lush beauty of the Latin American landscape, and the struggle for social justice in countries with wide socio-economic disparities fueled by foreign intervention.

Explore Latino Food & Culture

From [‘arepas’](#) in Venezuela to [‘horchata’](#) in Mexico, Hispanic cuisine has a global reach and influence. The flavors and richness of these foods are celebrated by many for their uniqueness and how they represent the cultures of each country.



For example, the national Cuban dish [‘ropa vieja’](#) (‘old clothes’) is a shredded beef and vegetable dish that got its name because it resembled a heap of colorful rags. This dish dates to the Middle Ages in Spain, where it was traditionally a way to stretch leftovers, and later taken to Cuba, where the locals made it their own.



A terrific addition to any celebration or holiday meal is the Puerto Rican drink [‘coquito,’](#) meaning ‘little coconut’ in Spanish. This traditional Christmas drink has many tasty variations, and similar drinks can be found throughout the Caribbean.

A favorite dessert worldwide is Mexican [‘choco-flan,’](#) a fusion of creamy flan with a bottom layer of chocolate cake and thin caramel glaze. This results in a beautiful and delicious combination just be sure not to overheat your caramel! Click on the dishes above for recipes to make at home. Buen Provecho! (Enjoy!)



Music is the Soul of Latino Culture

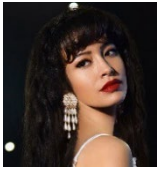
Latin American music comes from Central and South America, as well as Spanish-speaking nations in the Caribbean. Latin American music takes many forms and incorporates a wide range of styles, from rap and rock to jazz and classical. Because of its worldwide influence, the definition of Latin music is hazy and constantly changing, but several genres are indisputably Latin American:



[Salsa](#) is a Cuban genre of music that combines African and Spanish influences. The music is extremely fast, generally running about 150 beats per minute, and often accompanies dancing. A few artists include [Celia Cruz](#) and [Marc Anthony](#).

[Bachata](#), originally from the Dominican Republic, is one of the most popular Latin music genres today. Bachata started in the 1960s with songs by Jose Manuel Calderon, but at first this rhythm was not able to compete with the more popular Merengue. Today, Bachata has become a mainstream phenomenon capturing a worldwide audience, with artists like [Romeo Santos](#).





Regional Mexican is the best-selling genre of Latin music in the U.S. Considering everything that falls in this category, regional Mexican music includes many kinds of **popular** and **traditional** expressions, ranging from norteno and banda to ranchera and corrido. Artists such as Vicente Fernandez, Jenni Rivera, **Selena**, collectively bringing in millions of dollars in annual record sales.

Be a Change Agent

Start a LatinX Colleague Resource Group (CRG) in Your Ministry

CRGs leverage the unique strengths, views, and experiences of colleagues to impact community outreach efforts, business innovation, and colleague engagement.

Participation provides colleagues the opportunity to enhance cultural awareness, develop leadership skills, and network with colleagues across the region at all levels.

For more information about CRGs at Trinity Health, please contact Tawnya Morris, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant, at Tawnya.Morris@Trinity-Health.org.