



## NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.

The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race. On the 2000 Census form, people of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin could identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino." More than 35 million people identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino on the 2000 Census. (The content is Copyright 2004 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease ([www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)). Used with permission.)

Many Hispanic Americans trace their roots to the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas -- including the Arawaks (Puerto Rico), the Aztecs (Mexico), the Incas (South America), the Maya (Central America), and the Tainos (in Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places). Some trace their roots to the Spanish explorers -- who in the 1400s set out to find an easier and less costly way to trade with the Indies. Other Latinos trace their roots to the Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World. For purposes of the U.S. Census, Hispanic Americans today are identified according to the parts of the world from which they or their ancestors came, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, or the nations of Central or South America. ([www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com))

### Did you know that Juan Ponce de Leon discovered Florida?

In March of 1513, he landed near the site of what is now St. Augustine, Florida. He didn't realize he landed in North America. He thought he had landed on an island. He named it Florida because he saw lots of flowers (florida in Spanish means flowery). He was the first European to explore Florida and he didn't know it! The next day claimed the land in the name of the King of Spain. (<http://library.thinkquest.org>)

## LOCAL EVENTS

The Southwest Florida Museum of History is hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hispanic Heritage Festival on October 8, 2005, at the museum from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hispanic arts and crafts, literature and authors, music and dance as well as food will be highlighted. Visitors can enjoy the museum for just \$5 admission that day. The festival itself is free and open to the public with food and beverage available for purchase.

The Hispanic Heritage Festival of Southwest Florida is coming on Saturday, October 15, to the Lee County Sports Complex from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. Event organizers are Telemundo – Channel 43 and Comcast. Call 239-498-4368 for more information.