



ACTIVITY 6: MARIACHI AND THE NEW SOUTH

[Adapted from Smithsonian Global Sound “Meet the Mariachi”](#)

Grade Level: 4 – 8

Curriculum Areas: English Language Arts, Music, Social Studies

Purpose: This activity from Smithsonian Global Sound “is an introduction to the inviting sounds of mariachi: its instruments and how they are played, its rhythms and how it is important to people. The activity uses maps, video and interactive instrument demonstrations to give an ‘insider’s view’ that will help students enjoy the music and learn to talk about it with others.”

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the instruments and sound of the mariachi.
2. Students will learn about the settings and significance of mariachi performance.
3. Students will research mariachis and Mexican migration to the Southeast and map the location of mariachis in the region.

Time Required: Three to five 45-minute class periods

National Standards

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC

- **NA.5-8.9 [Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture](#)**

NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

- **NL-ENG.K-12.1 [Reading for Perspective](#)**
- **NL-ENG.K-12.2 [Reading for Understanding](#)**
- **NL-ENG.K-12.9 [Multicultural Understanding](#)**

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY, K-12

- **[Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking](#)**
- **[Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension](#)**

- [Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation](#)
- [Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities](#)

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY, K-4

- [Standard 5](#): The Causes and Nature of Various Movements of Large Groups of People into and within the United States, Now and Long Ago
- [Standard 6](#): Regional Folklore and Cultural Contributions That Helped to Form Our National Heritage

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY 5-12

- [Standard 2](#): Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States
- [Standard 2D](#)
The student understands contemporary American culture

[All National Arts Standards](#)

Brief Description: This bilingual English/Spanish Web site from Smithsonian Global Sound coincides with the New South panel of “Rhythm & Roots.” It can be used individually by students or via LCD projector with the entire class. Mariachi is one of various musical styles brought to the South by persons of Mexican ancestry. Mariachis are the best known type of Mexican music group, and their music has come to symbolize Mexicans and people of Mexican heritage wherever they live. The Web site features four components: 1) Music (with an interactive map of mariachi music at different sites); 2) video of Nati Cano's Mariachi Los Camperos (Los Angeles) performance of "México Lindo" (Pretty Mexico), a medley of songs about their pride in their home country; 3) instruments; and 4) quiz. To adapt this site to the southeastern region, discuss immigration and settlement patterns over time and why the Web site map emphasizes examples of mariachi in Mexico and the southwestern United States (for example: compare/contrast areas of the U.S. which were once part of Mexico or New Spain with areas affected by recent immigration).

The Web site map under “Music” shows cities in the U.S. and Mexico that have mariachis, but the map does not include the Southeast. There are now various mariachi ensembles in southeastern cities. Have students develop a class map of mariachis (or other genres of Mexican music) now found in the Southeast. A few leads for southeastern mariachis, along with photos and streamed audio, are listed below, but the Internet is not necessarily the best source here. Consult local Mexican businesses; stores selling Mexican foods often have flyers for musical performances. Some mariachis may just be passing through; others may be based in the region. What kinds of events do they play for? The Web site lists some important occasions, but there are others.

The “[Constructing a Cultural Map](#)” activity from “Louisiana Voices” may be adapted for a computer mapping project, or students may use paper maps.

Extensions

- Explore other forms of Mexican music in your community, state, or region.

Internet Resources for Mariachis in the Southeast

**Note: many mariachis will not be listed this way, but here are some starting points available online

[Mariachi 4You-online mariachi search](#); includes some groups in the Southeast.

[Mariachi Music](#); search “mariachi” for images in context: Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day, rodeo, etc.

[Mariachi Garibaldi documentary radio program](#)

[Mariachi Garibaldi, Montgomery, AL; “Guadalajara” lyrics and streamed music](#)

[Mariachi Publishing Company](#); useful Web site with many links, including educational resources

Other Forms of Mexican Music

[Arhoolie Records and the Roots of Tejano and Conjunto Music](#), an online exhibit which provides important background to a musical style now widespread among Mexican communities in the Southeast .

[Corridos sin Fronteras: A New World Ballad Tradition](#) (Smithsonian Global Sound)
Grades 4 - 12

Mexican *corridos* are story songs about local events and people. Listen to the many [corridos](#) found on Smithsonian Global Sound, and have students explore the history of the music and write their very own *corrido* to share with the class. Resources for teachers include lessons on how *corridos* provide insight into the Chicano struggle for social justice.

[Conjunto Music from South Texas](#) (Smithsonian Global Sound)
Grades 3 - 12

Use songs and social dances from the Mexico/USA border to introduce students to South Texas people, language, location and values. Also discuss issues such as immigration and experiences of living in the borderlands.

[Fiestas Guadalupanas in South Georgia from Wiregrass Ways Radio Series](#)

[Mississippi Folklife and Folk Artist Directory](#); includes links to Mexican and Guatemalan music events

[Posadas Documentary Radio Program on a Mexican Christmas custom](#)

[The Changing Face of Mexico](#) : This resource for educators consists of four units on aspects of Mexican culture, past and present. Each unit includes historical perspectives, classroom activities and recipes, including two common contexts for mariachi performance: **[16 de Septiembre](#)**, and **[The Quinceañera Celebration](#)**. Like many such resources, it focuses on these celebrations in Mexico, rather than noting similarities or differences with celebrations in the U.S., but it is a good, succinct introduction. It is adapted from “The Changing Face of Mexico: A Multimedia Resource Packet for North Carolina Educators,” produced by the Outreach Office of the Institute of Latin American Studies and made possible through funding from the Carolina Center for Public Service, The University of North Carolina, and originally published in 1999.