

This year, **National Hispanic Heritage Month** was celebrated from *Friday, Sept. 15 through Sunday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>* so I asked DCIC board member **Edith Perez** to write something about her Hispanic Heritage for our newsletter. Edith never does anything halfway and I received the following article that covers so much more than her Puerto Rican heritage. There is so much to learn and explore further. Thank you Edith!

As a Hispanic, I grew up observing many customs and traditions. In the Hispanic culture, traditions and customs are very important and are passed down from generation to generation.

Growing in a Puerto Rican household, our traditions and customs were observed and strongly encouraged. A beautiful custom that I observe till this day is asking my parents to bless me every time I see them. “BENDICION” (Bless me), is a word we utter when we see our parents or elder relatives, “Dios te bendiga” (God Bless you) is their response.

The following are some Hispanic countries with their most observed traditions:

**Puerto Rico** - Puerto Rico's culture is a blend of indigenous, Spanish, African and American influences that is reflected in its typical dishes, festivals, traditions, national observed dates and material heritage such as buildings, theaters and historical museums, art, dances and music. Puerto Rico's culture is complex, colorful, and welcoming. Our culture is part of our identity as a people. Some of the most important cultural events are:

1. Three Kings Day
2. Fiestas de Loiza
3. San Sebastian Street festivities
4. The Casals Festival
5. Festival of Bomba and Plena’
6. Festival of Masks

Puerto Rican culture is concentrated in its folklore, which is the set of traditions, beliefs, and customs of the popular classes.

**Mexico** - One of the beautiful customs in Mexico is Mariachis. Mariachis are traditional musicians from Mexico. Beyond music, these represent a cultural revolution, through the use of typical costumes and instruments that summarize the essence of the Mexican people.

**Honduras** - Soccer is the most popular sport in Honduras and is an important part of Honduran culture.

**Peru** - The Fiesta de Los Negritos de Huánuco, which celebrates the abolition of slavery with music and dance is a Peruvian tradition.

**Colombia** - The most important Colombian customs are definitely the traditional festivals of Colombia, which are organized without fail on festive dates.

One of these are the processions of Holy Week, during which the most important moments of Christ's death are recounted.

**Venezuela** - The customs and traditions of Venezuela are an ideal representation of its history and people. Some of the main customs and traditions of Venezuela are:

1. The dancing devils of Yare: a religious festival celebrated on the day of Corpus Christi.
2. Christmas customs: such as the masses of the aguinaldo, the hallacas and the bagpipes.
3. La Parranda de San Pedro: a musical celebration in honor of the patron saint of fishermen.
1. 4. The dance of San Juan Bautista: An Afro-Venezuelan dance performed on June 24.

**Bolivia** - is a country rich in culture and traditions. Some of the most important traditions are:

1. La Alasita de La Paz: a fair of miniatures sold on January 24 to attract prosperity.
2. The Oruro Carnival: a religious and cultural festival that brings together thousands of dancers and musicians.
3. Holy Week (Semana Santa)

**Cuba** - Cuba's most famous customs and traditions include:

1. Havana Carnivals, which take place in August, with multitudinous parades, which exhibit floats with salsa dances, rumba, and even reggaeton.
2. New Year's Eve party, in which the whole family gathers to celebrate the beginning of a new year.
3. The changüí.
4. Play dominoes.
5. The Guateque.

Cuban culture is a rich amalgam of African, Spanish, and Caribbean pastimes. Punctuality is a deep-rooted custom.

**Argentina** – Their main customs are:

1. Greeting with a kiss, a sign of affection among Argentines.
2. Dance the tango, a sensual and emblematic dance of Buenos Aires.
3. Make a barbecue, a meeting with friends to eat grilled meat.
4. Watching and playing football, a national passion that is lived with intensity.

**El Salvador** - The culture of El Salvador is a mixture of Native American and Latin American cultures. Some of the traditions and cultural manifestations of El Salvador are:

1. Typical costumes, which are used during the most important traditional festivals.
2. Gastronomy, which is one of the great riches that its people possess.
3. Indigenous peoples and language.
4. Artistic manifestations of El Salvador.
5. Religion.

**Dominican Republic** - The culture of the Dominican Republic is a diverse mix of different influences from around the world. The origins of the Dominican people and their customs consist predominantly of a European cultural base, with native Taino and African influences. The Spanish presence on the island for more than five centuries has left a significant imprint on Dominican culture, including colonial architecture, predominant religion, language, and traditions. Music and dance are important elements of Dominican culture, with genres such as merengue and bachata originating in the country. Food is also an important aspect of Dominican culture, with dishes such as sancocho, arroz con habichuelas and mofongo being popular throughout the country.

Hispanic heritage is looking back at our ancestors and the imprint left in every one of us that make us richer culturally, spiritually, and emotionally.

I hope this helped you learn more about Hispanic culture!