



# WHAT IS CINCO DE MAYO AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNITIES?

May, 2021.

## The context: What is *Cinco de Mayo*?<sup>1</sup>

According to the History TV Network, *Cinco de Mayo* is holiday that celebrates the date of the Mexican army's victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War, in 1862. *Cinco de Mayo* is also known as Battle of Puebla Day.

Throughout the years, it has become a minor celebration in Mexico, and it is commemorated mostly in Puebla.

In line with the article by History, in 1960, Chicano activists embraced the holiday as a way to increase pride among Mexican Americans and the festivities evolved into an inclusive celebration of Mexican heritage, turning to a huge celebration in the USA since then.

*Bueno*, now you know that *Cinco de Mayo* is not Mexican Independence Day ;)

## The facts: Why *Cinco de Mayo* is a synonym for drinking excessively?

The Business Insider<sup>2</sup> wrote a blog article in 2011 describing that even though the *Cinco de Mayo* celebrations gained popularity in the 1960s, it really took off when beer companies got involved. The Business Insider also stated that, in the early 1980s, Anheuser Busch and Miller each created Hispanic marketing departments and began sponsoring these celebrations.

Nowadays, *Cinco de Mayo* is popularly referred in many places as "*Cinco de Drinko*", and it is a holiday associated with drinking excessively. However, this holiday celebrates a proud achievement and shouldn't be about tacos, tequila, cervezas and margaritas.

## References

- [1 History TV Network](#)
- [2 Business Insider](#)
- [3 National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)
- [4 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#)
- [5 National Center for Biotechnology Information \(NCBI\)](#)

## The issue: Alcohol and the Hispanic and Latino communities

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) updated in 2021<sup>3</sup>, Hispanics are less likely to drink at all than are non-Hispanic Whites. In fact, Hispanics have high rates of abstinence from alcohol. But Hispanics who choose to drink are more likely to consume higher volumes of alcohol than non-Hispanic Whites.

The 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health<sup>4</sup> has shown that 7.0% of the Latino population over 18 years old struggle with a substance use disorder. Among those people, 2 in 5 struggled with illicit drugs, 3 in 4 struggled with alcohol use, and 1 in 8 Latinos struggled with drugs and alcohol simultaneously.

## Alcohol and COVID-19

The 2020 report developed by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI)<sup>5</sup> regarding alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Sectional Survey of US Adults, concluded that pandemics such as COVID-19 can cause many medical, psychological, and sociological problems, including increased alcohol consumption and related harms from such consumption.

According to the NCBI, alcohol is a harmful substance, and is, in fact, currently the fourth leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. Excessive drinking has also been associated with increased violence, crime, poverty, sexually transmitted diseases, and other significant public health harms.

This survey has also shown that, nearly two-thirds of the participants reported that their drinking had increased compared to their consumption rates prior to COVID-19. According to the participants, the reasons for this increase were increased stress, increased alcohol availability, and boredom.



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## Tips from the Prevention and Treatment perspectives

While last year we were all celebrating virtually and from distance, according to the COVID Data Tracker by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of today 44.3% of the population in the USA received at least one dose of the vaccine and 31.6% of the population is fully vaccinated<sup>6</sup>. Which means that individuals in the United States are feeling more comfortable and safer to go out and celebrate with friends and family. We recommend that everyone continue following the safety guidelines provided by the CDC such as<sup>7</sup>:

- Wear a mask
- Stay 6 feet away from others
- Get Vaccinated
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Wash your hands often
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect
- Monitor your health daily

For as much as *Cinco de Mayo* became an excuse to drink excessively, it is possible to enjoy celebrations without alcohol. Here are some ways to celebrate *Cinco de Mayo* while preventing substance use, misuse or abuse and/or protecting your recovery journey:

**Be with friends and family:** Connect with your friends, family, and people you trust via video calls, phone or messages. Ask them if they know what is celebrated during *Cinco de Mayo* and teach them if they don't.

## References

<sup>6</sup> [COVID Data Tracker by CDC](#)

<sup>7</sup> [How to Protect Yourself & Others by CDC](#)

Click here to learn about more about the [National Hispanic and Latino Addiction Technology Transfer Center](#)

Click here to learn about more about the [National Hispanic and Latino Prevention Technology Transfer Center](#)

**Enjoy the food:** What about cooking a Mexican dish like guacamole, quesadilla, tacos, chips & salsa? *¿Qué tal?* You can either go or order from your favorite Mexican restaurant and enjoy a delicious meal.

**Learn Mexico's History:** At this time, you probably already watched everything available on TV and your streaming catalogs but if you would like to learn more about the Mexican culture, watching movies or series is a great way to do so.

**Be Grateful:** Even when times are challenging, there are still many reasons to be thankful – every day! On *Cinco de Mayo*, reflect on all the good things in your life. It is a great opportunity to contact someone who has supported you and let them know that they have impacted you in a positive way.

**Ask for help:** In case you find yourself thinking about using alcohol on *Cinco de Mayo*, do not be afraid to ask for help. You can connect with providers and/or peers.

**Help others:** If you can, take time during *Cinco de Mayo* to check in with some of your peers in recovery who are likely to struggle during the holiday.

**Cinco de Mayo can be triggering and challenging but if you approach this holiday in the right way, you can have a positive experience. We are all in this together! ¡Adelante!**

You can visit the following websites for additional support and information.

**SAMHSA's National Helpline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and Español)  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

**SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline**  
Toll Free: 1-800-985-5990 (español e inglés)  
Text in Spanish: Envíe "Háblanos" al 66746  
Text in English: "TalkWithUs" al 66746 (TTY): 1-800-846-8517  
English: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>  
Spanish: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol>

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Toll Free: 1-888-628-9454  
English: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (TTY): 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)  
Spanish: <https://suicidpreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/>  
English: <https://suicidpreventionlifeline.org/>

**SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator** Sitio Web: <https://findtreatment.gov>

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA): Find your way to quality alcohol treatment <https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/>