

Mexican Artefact Collection



Guidance Notes for Teachers

A great collection of artefacts for your Mexican topic. Bring geography learning to life and use these items as discussion prompts for a range of everyday topics, including Mexican history, religion, festivals, family life and more! Create opportunities for hands-on learning experiences.



Contents:

- 1 x God Mask
- 1 x Chocolate Whisk
- 1 x Mexican Cloth
- 1 x Replica Metate
- 1 x Bunting
- 1 x Mini Piñata
- 1 x Finger Pull
- 1 x Tortilla Basket
- 1 x Ceramic Salsa Pot
- 1 x Traditional Hand Drum
- 1 x Terracotta Pot
- 1 x Decorated Tile

Please note contents and designs may vary.

The resources in the Mexican Artefact Pack shown in the pictures on the left can be used in KS1 and KS2 classrooms.

- Explore North American cultures and life with real life artefacts and high-quality replicas.
- Create cross-curricular links and cover elements of the Geography, RE, History and Art and Design curriculum.
- Introduce the resources during whole class teaching and provide time for hands-on exploration in small groups.
- Encourage questioning and research.
- Use as starting points for compare and contrast activities.
- Enhance classroom displays and promote discussion by displaying the items.
- Add the resources to tabletop areas and promote independent investigation.

Activity 1 – Mystery Item Activity

- Introduce the resources without naming or identifying them.
- Give the pupils time to work together to guess what the items are.
- Encourage the pupils to predict what the less obvious items may be used for.

Activity 2 – Hands-on Enquiry

- Identify and name each of the resources.
- Talk about the items and what they are used for.
- Give time for small groups to handle each resource.

Activity 3 – Geography Investigation

- Use a world map to locate Mexico.
- Research Mexico and create a fact file. Think about the flag, culture, food, history and significant landmarks.
- Plan a Mexican themed day! Make decorations and piñatas. Make a simple salsa and hot chocolate. Authentic Mexican salsas are based on just a few ingredients – tomatoes, chillies, onions and garlic, but you could leave out the chillies!

Activity 4 – Art and Design

- Explore images of Mexican paper bunting. Design and create bunting – consider ways to cut the paper to make interesting designs.
- Explore images of gods and goddesses Use clay to create god masks, mini pottery items and tiles.
- Explore images of Mexican tiles. Design intricate patterns in a similar style.

Discussion Points – Topics

➤ Terracotta Pot

Pottery is a commonly found object in Mexican homes and they are widely used to store and present food and drink. These functional vessels come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are used regularly in daily life. Common examples include water jugs and salsa dishes.

Explore further – Use online resources to explore Mexican pottery. Design and make simple clay pots.

Mini Metate (*pronunciation – muh-tah-tee*)

A metate is a grinding stone used for processing grain and seeds. They are usually made of heavy volcanic rock and vary in size. They are traditionally used by women, to make flour to use to make tortillas. They exist in many different designs and sizes, and are still used in many parts of Mexico today. This is a miniature replica to show the shape, actual sizes are too heavy to move and too big for an artefact pack!

Explore further – Use online resources to explore the tradition of tortilla making using a metate.



This mask features a headdress and common ear ornamentation. This is a representation of a Mayan god but it can be difficult to positively identify exactly which one it is. Gods and goddesses were depicted in a variety of way throughout the different civilisations of the Central American timeline and there were some deities worshipped by more than one civilisation: particularly gods of maize, rain, light, the sky and the sun. Many gods also had many different names!

Explore further – Research the gods and goddesses that are worshipped in Mexico.

➤ Chocolate Whisk

Known as molinillo, these special chocolate whisks are ornately hand carved items that work brilliantly for mixing and frothing up a hot chocolate. They are held between both palms and then rolled back forth. The two rings above the whisk section spin around to create a delicious froth. Chocolate was discovered in Mexico, by the Mayans, over 4,000 years ago. The routine of making and drinking a chocolate drink formed an important part of everyday life for the ancient civilizations of Mexico. The drink was bitter and frothy, and often mixed with chilli!

Explore further - Explore the journey from cacao bean to chocolate! Investigate Fairtrade chocolate.

➤ Mini Piñata

Traditionally, a Mexican piñata was made by decorating a clay pot with papier mâché and tissue paper in the shape of a seven-pointed star, however, now they leave out the clay pot and they come in all shapes and sizes! Usually, the piñata would have been filled with fruits, and now more commonly is filled with sweets. Each person will have a turn at hitting the piñata with a stick whilst wearing a blindfold and having been spun around a number of times. The aim is to break the piñata so that the treats inside all fall out. This replica item is smaller than a regular sized piñata and unfortunately it does not contain sweets!

Explore further – Use online resources to explore piñata designs. Design and make a piñata.

➤ Mexican Cloth

This Fair Trade serape has been handmade in Mexico from acrylic and cotton. Traditionally, a serape is worn by draping it over the shoulders. There is evidence of serapes dating back to Aztec Mexico and they were highly prized items because of their weave and striking colours, commonly worn by men, and especially horse riders. Serapes are now widely used to decorate homes, as rugs and throws.

Explore further – Design a bright and colourful serape.



➤ Fair Trade

Fair Trade is a worldwide movement that aims to help farmers and producers in less economically developed countries. The term Fair Trade means that producers receive a fair price for the goods they produce.

The items included in this pack can be a way to teach and learn about the principles of Fair Trade. Teaching the principles of Fair Trade provides learning opportunities in many areas of learning, including PSED, Understanding the World and Geography. The items have been sourced by supplier who is a member of [BAFTS](#) (the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers) for over 25 years and are also a BAFTS recognised Fair Trade importer.

The suppliers of the items in this pack are small family businesses employing only a few people; and try to keep them in continuous work enabling their businesses to grow.

Explore further - Fairtrade Foundation are a global organisation working with businesses, consumers and campaigners to secure a better deal for farmers and producers.