

Name: _____ **KEY** _____

Period: _____ Date: _____

Mexico Study Sheet

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1. Nearly half of Mexico has what type of climate? **Arid or semi-arid**

2. Describe how climate and geography have affected food customs in the following areas of Mexico.

a. Bordered by water- **fish important**

b. Borders the USA- **dry climate- raise cattle- beef staple food**

c. Southern Gulf Coast- **lots of rain- tropical fruits and vegetables**

d. Central plateau- **adequate moisture and cool temps- corn & beans**

3. Who were the Conquistadores and what did they do in Mexico?

They were Spanish explorers lead by Hernando Cortez who explored Mexico and plundered villages for gold.

4. What areas of Mexico culture was greatly influenced by the Spanish control of Mexico?

The areas of architecture, language and food customs.

5. True or **False** More than half of Mexico's people are farmers because of the rich quality of their soil. **Poor quality soil**

6. Name Mexico's two major crops and five other important crops.

Corn is the largest crop and beans are the second largest crop.

Others are: sugar cane, coffee, tomatoes, green peppers, peas, melons, citrus fruits, strawberries, cocoa beans, wheat, barley, rice and oats.

7. What foods did the Aztecs contribute to Mexican cuisine? How was their food prepared?

Aztecs contributed chocolate, vanilla, corn, peppers, peanuts, tomatoes, avocados, squash, beans, sweet potatoes, pineapples and papayas.

8. What did the Spanish add to Mexican cuisine? As a result of these additions, how did the cooking methods change in Mexico?

Spanish added oil, wine, cinnamon, clove, rice, wheat, peaches, apricots, beef and chicken.

Aztecs boiled, broiled and steamed their foods. With the addition of oil frying became an important part of cooking in Mexico.

9. Corn and its products form the basis of Mexican cuisine. Describe the following dishes made with tortillas and corn products.

a. Enchiladas – tortillas filled with a mixture of shredded meat or chicken, onions, garlic, and chilies- baked with cheese and tomato sauce

b. Tostadas – fry tortillas and garnish with onions, chilies, beans, shredded lettuce, meat and cheese

c. Quesadillas – deep fried turnovers of tortillas filled with meat, sauce, cheese, beans or vegetables

d. Burritos – tortillas wrapped around meat and bean filling

e. Tamales – stuff small amounts of corn dough, meat, beans and tuck into a corn husk that is folded and steamed or roasted on an open fire

10. Describe how to make *frijoles refritos*.

Cook beans until they are soft, then mash the beans and fry them slowly. Served with grated cheese.

11. How does the Mexican cook use the following two types of peppers?

a. red peppers – dried except for ripe red bell peppers and pimentos

b. green peppers – used fresh

12. List 9 Mexican vegetables that are also common in the USA.
Zucchini, artichokes, white potatoes, spinach, chard, lettuce, beets, cauliflower, and carrots
13. List and describe 4 less common vegetables.
Huazontle (wild broccoli), jicama (a large gray root), noploe (tender cactus leaves) and chayotes (a tropical squash)
14. What is *guacamole*?
A spread made from mashed avocado, tomato, and onion. Served with tortillas or crisp corn chips
15. What are five tropical fruits popular in Mexico?
Bananas, pineapples, guavas, and papayas and prickly pears
16. What are *moles* and what is the final ingredient?
A complex sauce made from chilies, almonds, raisins, garlic, sesame seeds, onions, tomatoes, cinnamon, cloves, coriander seeds, and anise seeds. The last ingredient is unsweetened chocolate just before serving.
17. Why can Mexican stews be simmered for long periods of time without being overcooked?
Because of the high altitude the boiling point in many parts of Mexico is lower. Stews can be simmered many hours to develop flavor.
18. What ingredients were used by the early Spanish and Portuguese cooks to prepare desserts?
Large amounts of eggs and sugar
19. What is a *molinillo* used for?
It is used to beat chocolate into foam before serving.
20. What are the tortillas made of in Northern Mexico and why?
They grow wheat and raise cattle so tortillas are made from wheat.

21. What are *plantains*?

They are green, starchy fruits that have a bland flavor and look much like large bananas.

22. In Southern Mexico what are *tamales* wrapped in?

They are wrapped in banana leaves.

23. Fill in the chart below with information about Mexican Meals.

<i>Name of the Meal</i>	<i>Time meal is eaten</i>	<i>Typical foods eaten at this meal</i>
Desayuno	Breakfast	Fruit, tortillas. bread, or sweet rolls, eggs or meat, and coffee or chocolate. Huevos rancheros- eggs with chilies on tortillas
Comida	Middle of day	Appetizer, a soup, a small dish of stew, a main course, beans, dessert, and coffee. Tortillas traditionally served.
Merienda	Light snack- 5:00- 6:00 PM	Chocolate or coffee, fruit, and dulce (sweet breads)
Cena	Supper between 8:00 – 10:00 PM	Similar to comida but smaller and lighter