



# **YOU ARE WHERE YOU LIVE**

DISCOVERING  
OAXACA, MEXICO  
THROUGH LITERATURE

By Michelle Menard

# ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does your home make you who you are?
- How does the place you come from affect the way people see you?
- How do people live in rural Oaxaca, Mexico?
- What knowledge do you acquire by living in a particular place?





# READ AND DISCUSS

“You will always be Esperanza. You will always be Mango Street. You can’t erase what you know. You can’t forget who you are.”

- from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

- What do you think this quote means?
- List the places you come from. The places can be neighborhoods, schools, cities, states, and countries.



# QUICK WRITE

- What are all of the things that make you who you are? Is it where you come from? What you wear? Who you hang around?

Write for 5 minutes in response to these questions. Do not erase. You may start over or cross words out, but you may not erase. You must write for the full 5 minutes.



**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**





## **OAXACA, MEXICO**



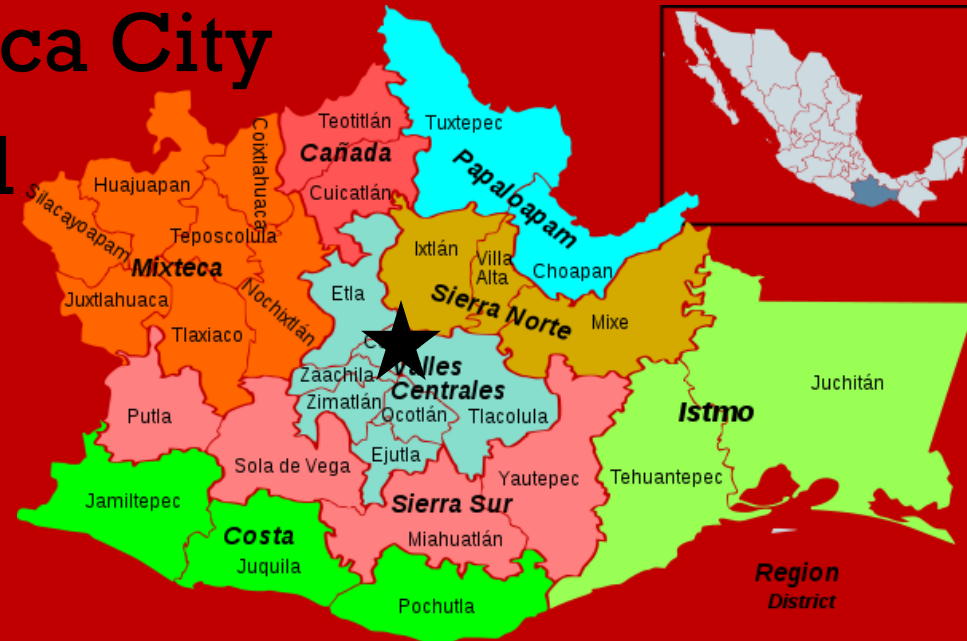
**DISTANCE FROM MARYLAND TO OAXACA?**

**2,611 miles!**



# OAXACA, MEXICO

- Population: >3,500,000 people
- 5<sup>th</sup> largest state in Mexico
- Capital: Oaxaca City
- Impoverished
- Known for indigenous cultures



# INDIGENOUS CULTURES

- 16 officially recognized groups
- More than 52% of total population
  - 347,000 *Zapotecs*
  - 241,000 *Mixtecs*
- Indigenous = native

Two young dancers perform a Mixteco jarabe, a traditional Oaxacan dance.



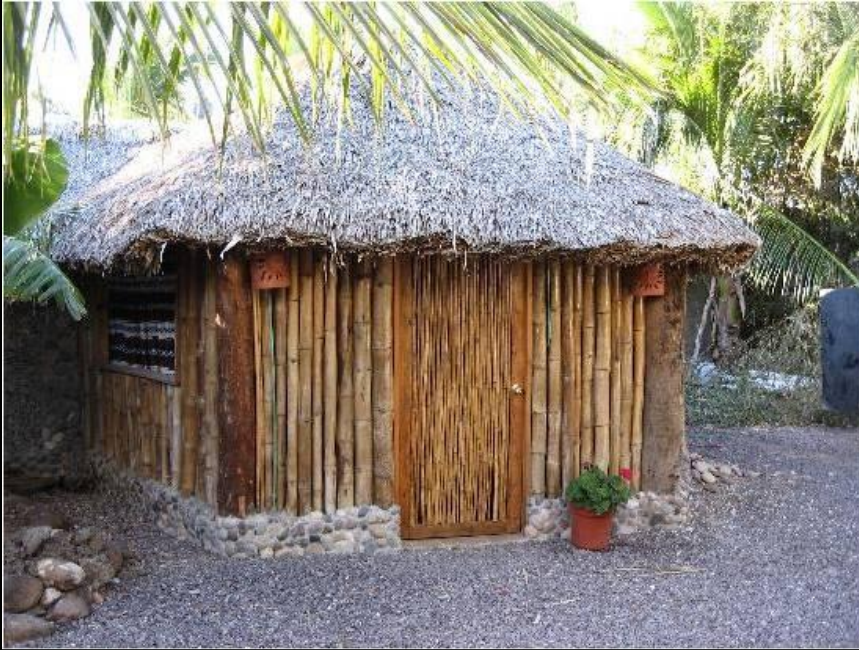


# INDIGENOUS OAXACA





# RURAL HOMES



Building materials include bamboo (left) and adobe (right) . Other materials include: stone, cement, and wood.





Mixtec Village:  
Tecojotes



# FAMILY FARM



This family farm is located in Tlapanalá, Puebla.

Population: 400





# “LAUNDRY ROOM”





# KITCHEN





# FOOD PRODUCTION



Orchard and Garden Plot in Tlapanalá, Puebla



# ANIMALS



Rural Mexicans raise animals such as goats and chickens for food, eggs, milk, and meat.



This doll shows typical Mixtec attire.

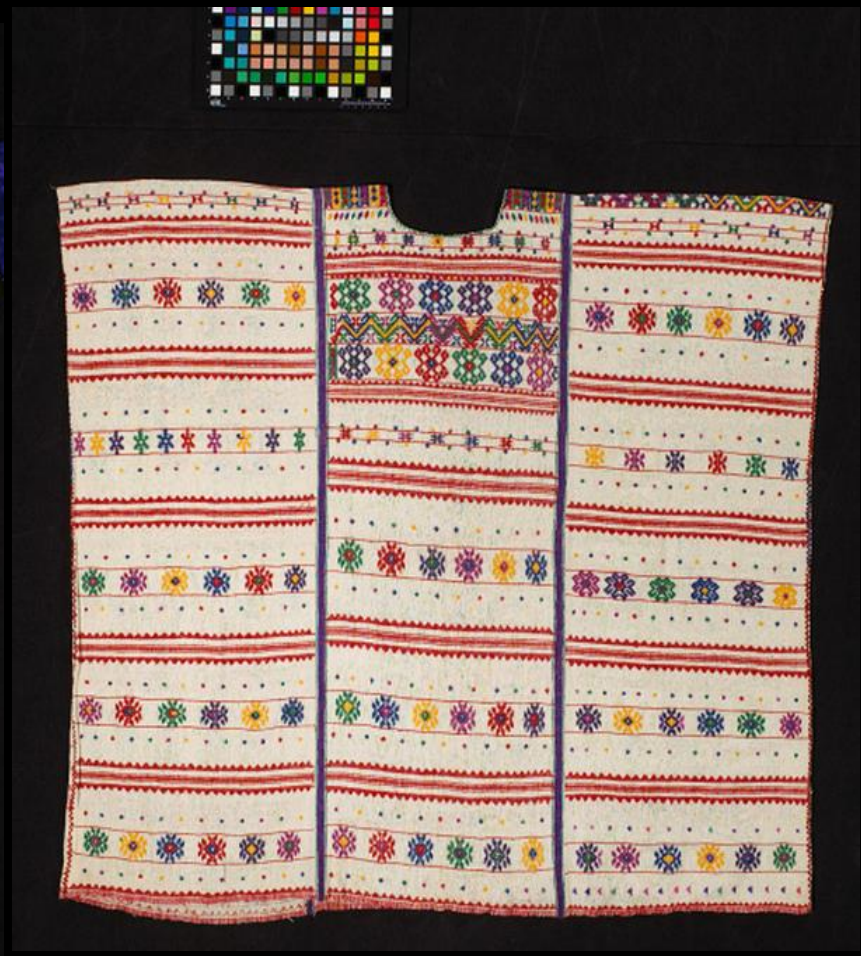
- Huipil – top
- Skirt
- Rebozo – shawl used to cover head
- Ribbons braided into hair

**MIXTEC DOLL  
OAXACA, MEXICO**



# HUIPILES

Indigenous people of Oaxaca are known for their weaving. Each village has its own style. The style of huipil varies by village.







# FOOD



## Mixtec farmers grow:

- Corn
- Beans
- Chilis
- Coffee
- Chocolate
- Tomatoes
- Cilantro
- Garlic
- Onions



# CORN



Corn is ground up and used to make tortillas. Metates are used to grind the corn.



# CHOCOLATE





# CHOCOLATE





# COFFEE





# COFFEE





# MEZCAL

“Para todo mal, mezcal, y para todo bien tambien.”





# MEZCAL PRODUCTION



Maguey heart (piña) used in mezcal production



Roasted piñas



Earthen oven used to roast piñas



# MEZCAL PRODUCTION



Grinding  
of maguey  
hearts



Roasted maguey, a tasty snack  
for humans and horses!







**Preparation of hierba buena for use in tea and soup. Also used for medicinal purposes.**







# OAXACAN TAMALES





# SQUASH FLOWERS





# OTHER DISHES



Left, various typical Oaxacan dishes served at Zandunga, in Oaxaca City.

Right, bocadillos prepared on a comal by women in Tlapanalá, Puebla





# BELIEFS

- Connection to the land
- Ancient religious beliefs combined with Roman Catholicism from the Spaniards
- All things have a spirit, including streams, trees, and animals
- Guardian spirit animal that accompanies people to the spirit world and protects them from evil spirits
- Mutual or reciprocal help



# RABBIT IN THE MOON





# RABBIT IN THE MOON

According to Aztec legend, gods served as the suns. Over the history of mankind, there had been four creations, each with its own sun god. For the fifth creation, the gods decided that two of them would have to sacrifice themselves in a fire in order to serve as the sun and the moon.

They chose the wealthy and strong Tecciztecatl to be the sun because he would shine brightly to illuminate the day. They chose the sickly and poor Nanahuatzin to serve as the moon because he would not outshine the sun.

When the time to sacrifice came, Tecciztecatl proved to be a coward. He tried four times and failed to jump into the fire. When the gods called Nanahuatzin to jump into the flames, he did so with courage. After this, Tecciztecatl followed his fellow god into the flames.

Because of his courage, Nanahuatzin shined equally as brightly as Tecciztecatl. The other gods were so disgusted with Tecciztecatl that they threw a rabbit into his face in order to dim his light. To this day, we can see the impression of the rabbit in the moon.



# JAGUARS



Jaguars symbolize power and royalty in indigenous Mexican cultures.

Many believe they protect healers from evil spirits when they travel to the spirit world.



Hunt in the day and the night

Equally powerful in trees and in water



# HERONS



## Nahuatl Words

aztatl (heron)

+

tlan (place of)

=

Aztlan (place of the heron)

Aztlan is the mythical home  
of the Aztec people





# PLANTS FROM *WHAT THE MOON SAW*



Huele de Noche



Copal

# IMAGES FROM *WHAT THE MOON SAW*



Tire Sandals



Gourds



Machete



# IMAGE ATTRIBUTION

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- Slide 3: Untitled image of boy in Tlapanalá, Puebla, Mexico by Javier Montes D'Arce
- Slide 3: Untitled image of women in Oaxaca by Javier Montes D'Arce
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- Slide 8: Location North America by Bosonic dressing  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Location\\_North\\_America.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Location_North_America.svg)
- Slide 9: Oaxaca Regions and Districts by El bart089  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oaxaca\\_regions\\_and\\_districts.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oaxaca_regions_and_districts.svg)
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- Slide 11: Indigenous woman walking in Teotitlan de Valle, Oaxaca by Michelle Menard
- Slide 12: Bamboo Home by Laurent Gilet [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bamboo\\_home.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bamboo_home.jpg)
- Slide 12: Adobe Brick House by Vmenkov <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Adobe-brick-house-8039.jpg>
- Slide 13: Mixtec village by Michelle Menard
- Slide 14: Family Farm 1 in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 14: Family Farm 2 in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 15: Wash Tub 1 in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 15: Wash Tub 2 in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 16: Outdoor Kitchen in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 17: Diego from Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 17: Family Farm in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard
- Slide 18: Turekys in Tlapanalá, Puebla by Michelle Menard

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- Slide 22: Mangoes in Outdoor Market in Oaxaca City by Michelle Menard
- Slide 23: Mexican corn by Javier Montes D'Arce
- Slide 23: Abigail Mendoza with Metate by Michelle Menard
- Slide 24: Cocoa beans by David Monniaux [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cocoa\\_beans\\_P1410151.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cocoa_beans_P1410151.JPG)
- Slide 24: Chocolate Mill in Oaxaca City by Michelle Menard
- Slide 24: A little mill in Oaxaca by Glorgana [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mexican\\_Cocoa\\_Mills.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mexican_Cocoa_Mills.JPG)
- Slide 25: Oaxacan Hot Chocolate at Zandunga by Michelle Menard
- Slide 25: Mole Enchilada in Oaxaca City by Michelle Menard
- Slide 26: Typical Brazilian coffee by Dan Bollinger [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:15\\_degrees\\_green\\_coffee.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:15_degrees_green_coffee.png)
- Slide 26: Coffee berries by Stanislaw Szydlo [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Coffee\\_berries\\_1.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Coffee_berries_1.jpg)
- Slide 26: Coffee beans being sorted by Quadell [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Coffee\\_beans\\_being\\_sorted\\_and\\_pulped.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Coffee_beans_being_sorted_and_pulped.jpg)



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- Slide 28: Mezcal at Zandunga by Michelle Menard
- Slide 29: Agave Heart by Michelle Menard
- Slide 29: Earthen Oven by Michelle Menard
- Slide 29: Roasted Agave Hearts by Michelle Menard
- Slide 30: Grinding Roasted Agave by Michelle Menard
- Slide 30: Horse Eating Roasted Agave by Michelle Menard
- Slide 30: Roasted Agave Snack by Michelle Menard
- Slides 31 & 32: Abigail Mendoza by Javier Montes D'Arce
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- Slide 33: Oaxacan Tamal at Zandunga by Michelle Menard
- Slide 33: Lunch from Karnataka by Pamri [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:lunch\\_from\\_karnataka\\_on\\_a\\_plantain\\_leaf.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:lunch_from_karnataka_on_a_plantain_leaf.jpg)
- Slide 34: Squash Flowers in Teotitlan de Valle by Michelle Menard
- Slide 34: Squash Flower Soup by Michelle Menard
- Slide 35: Zandunga Dinner by Michelle Menard
- Slide 35: Bocadoillos in Tlapanalá by Michelle Menard

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- Slide 36: Full Moon by GHRevera <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:FullMoon2010.jpg>
- Slide 36: Rabbit in the moon standing by pot by Zeimusu [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rabbit\\_in\\_the\\_moon\\_standing\\_by\\_pot.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rabbit_in_the_moon_standing_by_pot.png)
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- Slide 40: Close-up of just opened Night Blooming Jasmines by Asit K. Ghosh [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jasmine\\_NightBlooming2\\_Asit.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jasmine_NightBlooming2_Asit.jpg)
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- Slide 41: Gourds – grown in a suburban garden in Australia by Peter Woodard [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gourds\\_-\\_grown\\_in\\_the\\_garden.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gourds_-_grown_in_the_garden.JPG)
- Slide 41: Tire sandals by Dennis Jarvis [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tire\\_Sandals.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tire_Sandals.jpg)
- Slide 41: Machete by KoS [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Machete\\_kos.pg.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Machete_kos.pg.jpg)



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