

# NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

*HISPANICS: A LEGACY OF  
HISTORY, A PRESENT OF ACTION  
AND A FUTURE OF SUCCESS*

September 15–October 15, 2014

# National Hispanic Heritage Month

2

Each year, we observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th to October 15th, celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens with ancestors from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.



# National Hispanic Heritage Month

3

September 15th is the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.



Mexico declared its independence on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th. Columbus Day is recognized on October 12th.

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4



Photo courtesy of  
the White House

The observance started in September 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon B. Johnson.

In 1970, the Hispanic population of the United States was 9.6 million, constituting 4.7 percent of the nation's total population.

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5



Photo courtesy of the  
Ronald Reagan Library

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded the length of the observance, establishing Hispanic Heritage Month.

The Hispanic population that same year was 19.4 million, roughly 7.9 percent of the nation's total population.



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6

Between July 1, 2011, and July 1, 2012, the number of Hispanics in America rose by 1.1 million.

This number is nearly half of the approximately 2.3 million people added to the nation's population during this period.



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7

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population as of July 2, 2013, was 54.1 million.



Constituting 17.1 percent of the nation's total population, Hispanics are now the nation's largest ethnic minority group.

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8

In 2060, the projected Hispanic population of the U.S. will be 128.8 million. According to this projection, Hispanics will constitute 31 percent of the nation's population.





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9

Generations of Hispanics have enriched every facet of our national identity, with traditions that reflect many diverse Hispanic/Latino ancestries.



Photo courtesy of the Library  
of Congress

Moreover, Hispanics have shaped and strengthened the fabric of the United States through their public service. This presentation features two extraordinary Hispanics.

# National Hispanic Heritage Month

10



Dr. France A. Córdoba  
Director of the National  
Science Foundation

# National Hispanic Heritage Month

11

Dr. Córdova's profound scientific knowledge as a world-renowned astrophysicist, garners her high distinction amongst a field typically dominated by men.

Not only is she a woman breaking gender boundaries, but a Hispanic woman—who through her work, perseverance, and intelligence, continues breaking down cultural stereotypes and opening doors for others to follow in her footsteps.



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12

- Internationally recognized astrophysicist
- Graduated cum laude from Stanford University in English
- Went back to school and earned a Ph.D. in physics
- Youngest person—and only second woman—ever named chief scientist at NASA
- Changed the way astronomers studied space
- Sworn in as director of the National Science Foundation in 2014, the first Latina to head the agency

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13



Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez  
Medal of Honor Recipient



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14

The son of a Texas sharecropper, a seventh-grade dropout, and later an orphan who grew up taunted by the term “dumb Mexican” performed one of the most remarkable feats of valor in the Vietnam War.



15 year old Benavidez

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15

- Enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1955
- In 1965 during a patrol, he stepped on a land mine
- Returned to Fort Bragg and began training for the Army Special Forces in 1966
- Returned to Vietnam in January 1968
- Saved the lives of at least eight men
- Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1981, one of fifty-nine Hispanics to be awarded



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16

## Highlights of Hispanic Representation in the DoD:

- Compared to FY 2008, Hispanic representation in the DoD in FY 2013 is higher in both the officer corps and enlisted force.
- Overall Hispanic Officer Corps representation of 5.9 percent in the FY 2013 officer corps is higher than the FY 2008 representation of 5.3 percent.
- Hispanic representation in the DoD enlisted force was 13 percent, 1.2 percent higher than FY 2008.

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17

- The Hispanic Civilian workforce largely remained the same from 6.3 percent in FY 2008 to 6.4 percent in FY 2013.

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18

Hispanics have exerted a profound influence on our country through their strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and public service.

They have enhanced and shaped our national character with centuries-old traditions that reflect their multiethnic and multicultural customs.



# National Hispanic Heritage Month

19



# National Hispanic Heritage Month

20

*“From the earliest days of our Republic, Hispanic Americans have written crucial chapters in our national story. Hispanics have honorably defended our country in war and built prosperity during times of peace. They run successful businesses, teach our next generation of leaders, and pioneer scientific and technological breakthroughs. This month, America acknowledges these vital contributions and celebrates our Hispanic heritage.”*

—President Barack Obama  
Presidential Proclamation 2013

# Resources

21

<http://www.army.mil/hispanicamericans/english/profiles/benavidez.html>

[http://www.defense.gov/specials/reagan/reaganphotoessay/pinning\\_3.html](http://www.defense.gov/specials/reagan/reaganphotoessay/pinning_3.html)

<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/members/bio.jsp?pers=24758>

<http://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/photographs>

<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/members/bio.jsp?pers=24758>

[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb13-ff19.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb13-ff19.html)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/13/presidential-proclamation-national-hispanic-heritage-month-2013>

<http://www.pbs.org/latino-americans/en/>



# Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

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