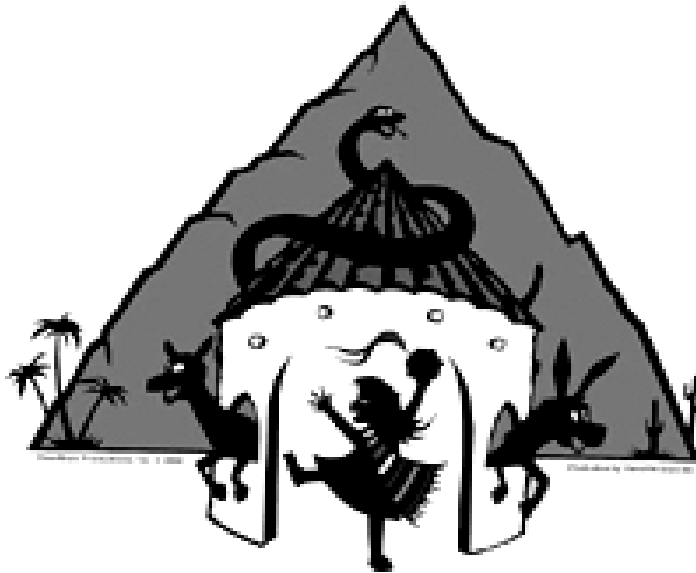


Discovery Theater

*with Dinorock
Productions, Inc.
present*

Mi Casa Es Su Casa



A REPRODUCIBLE LEARNING GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

This guide is designed to help you and your students prepare for, enjoy, and discuss programs by *Mi Casa es Su Casa*. It contains background information, discussion questions and activities. Appropriate for all ages.

*Discovery Theater programs are
made possible, in part, by gifts*

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The Smithsonian Associates

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See our website for tickets, location, directions, resources for teachers, and much more!

Introduction



Mi Casa Es Su Casa celebrates the music, stories, landscapes and animals of **Latin America**. This vast region, bigger than the United States, **includes Mexico, Central America, South America**, and parts of the West Indies.

Latin American life is **an exciting mix** of sights, sounds, and flavors from around the world. Colonists from Spain and Portugal and slaves from Africa brought their own music, dances, stories, and languages. Over the centuries, these mingled with the customs of Latin America's many native peoples. The result is a vibrant blend, always changing as you move from one country to another.

A Message from the Artist--Michele Valeri

"Mi casa es su casa" is Español for "My house is your house".



While I was still in college, I spent a summer in the mountains of Mexico as part of a cultural program. We traveled from San Antonio, Texas to Mexico City on a train. The trip took 36 hours. Fourteen of us stumbled off the

train in Mexico City at about ten o'clock one hot June night.

Out of the confusion in the station stepped a small, dark-eyed woman. "Michele?" she said, coming right up to me, although we'd never met. Her name was Senora Gonzalez. My mother and her eldest daughter were church friends back in Washington, D.C., and she had come to the station to invite us to stay in her home. "*Mi casa es su casa*," she said.

Senora Gonzalez was the first, but not the last, Latin American to say that to me. I spent three months in Mexico and returned twice more to work in seven Latin American countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Panama and Mexico. In each country people opened their homes to me as Senora Gonzalez had done.



YUM, YUM, LET'S EAT!

When Spanish conquerors came to Latin America, they discovered a **New World of flavors!** Foods that Latin America gave to the world include

- Chocolate
- Corn
- Tomatoes
- Peanuts
- Cinnamon
- Vanilla
- Chicle (rubbery stuff that puts the "chew" in chewing gum!)



- Chili peppers
- Pineapples
- Mangoes

Are there any foods on this list that you *haven't* tasted?
How many of these foods did you eat in the last week?

The land, also, is full of breathtaking variety. Latin America is home to enormous modern cities, but also to deserts, tropical beaches, and frigid areas near the South Pole. The songs from ***Mi Casa Es Su Casa*** mention some of these unforgettable places, including the Amazon jungle and the towering Andes mountains.

IN THE JUNGLE, THE MIGHTY JUNGLE

The Amazon Jungle is a tropical rainforest. It is huge! It is located in South America and covers nine countries, including: Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia. It is located near the **equator**, so it stays hot all year – there is no “winter” as temperate regions experience. Rainforests receive 85 inches or more of rain each year, but there may be a “dry” and “wet” season. High humidity, constant warmth, lots of sunshine, and loads of rain promote plant growth year round. Trees become enormous!

SPANISH VOCABULARY

- Agua**—Water
Amigo—Friend
Anaconda—A large, non-poisonous snake
Baiao—A jaunty syncopated rhythm from Brazil
Baile conmigo—Dance with me
Burrito—Donkey
Cama—Bed
Cha-cha—A Latin American dance
Ciao—Bye-bye, so long
Cielo—Shy
Claves—Latin American rhythm sticks
¿Como estás?—How are you?
Cucaracha—Cockroach
Cumbia—A Caribbean island dance that is very popular in Colombia
Díme—Literally, “tell me,” but roughly, “hello”
Es muy grande—It’s very big
Fiesta—Party
Grillo chiquito—Little cricket
Hola—Hello
Jarabe—The national dance of Mexico, known as the Mexican hat dance
Viva la gente—Long live the people
Viento—Wind
Yo me voy—I’m going



RELATED RESOURCES

- ***Mi Casa Es Su Casa***. All the great songs from ***Mi Casa***, recorded by Michele Valeri and friends.
- ***Hands-On Latin America: Art Activities for All Ages***, by Yvonne Y. Merrill. A fun intro to Latin American history and cultures through craft-making with clay, wool, styrofoam, etc. Not for the youngest students.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



Each year, from September 15 to October 15, the United States honors the many contributions Hispanic-Americans have made and continue to make to our nation by observing National Hispanic Heritage Month. Throughout that time, special events celebrate the varied and vibrant cultures of the Hispanic world.

Did You Know...

...that September 15th was chosen as the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month because it marks the anniversary of independence for five Hispanic countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua? (Mexico achieved independence on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th.)

...that more than 35 million Americans (12.5%) identified themselves as Hispanic in origin on the 2000 census?

About Dinorock Productions

The company began in 1984 with the production of their first album, called *Dinosaur Rock*, the story of an eccentric yodeling paleontologist whose magic spells can bring dinosaurs back to life. The recording led to a show, which led to the formation of a touring company. Since then the company has produced nine more dinosaur shows: *The Great Dinosaur Mystery*, *Dinosaur Babies*, *A Dinosaur Chorus*, *Divertimento in D(inosaur)*, *The Dinosaur Book of World Records*, *Dinosaurs Forever*, *T-Rex's Holiday Surprise*, *Dinosaur Desperadoes* and *Mi Casa Es Su Casa*. *Mi Casa* is one of 5 award-winning record albums produced, composed, and performed by Michele Valeri, one of the original Dinorock founders. (She calls it her “thank-you” to the many Latin American friends who opened their homes to her over the years!) When not performing, Michele travels the country conducting teacher/artist training workshops for the Kennedy Center & Wolf Trap. Learn more at www.dinorock.com.

About Discovery Theater

DISCOVERY THEATER (www.DiscoveryTheater.org), the Smithsonian Institution's theater for children, is dedicated to offering the best in live educational performing arts for young people. Each year, more than 50,000 children and their adults visit Discovery Theater on the National Mall to explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons.



Discovery Theater's new specially-designed performance space is located next to the Smithsonian Castle, in the S. Dillon Ripley Center—the Smithsonian's underground learning center with classrooms, lecture halls, artists' studios and more. Favorite DT programs also tour schools and museums, which means that DT's special brand of educational entertainment for kids is more widely available than ever before. For details, call 202-633-8700 or see www.DiscoveryTheater.org.