

Mexico

In this Bag:

- Calacas (skull mask) cutout
- Popsicle stick
- 5 rectangles of tissue paper
- String

What you Need at Home:

- Markers, paint, colored pencils or crayons
- Scissors
- Tape



Learn about Mexico and craft with us by following the instructional video on our virtual hub:
<http://www.creativeartsguild.org/events/annual-events/festival1/childrens-hill>



Fun Facts about Mexico:

- The official name of for Mexico is the United Mexican States.
- Mexico is the 11th most populated country in the world with around 117 million people (as of July 2012).
- Mexico is the 14th largest country by land area.
- There are 31 states in Mexico as well as the capital city (Mexico City).
- Mexico is home to over 30 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and is a popular tourist destination.
- Stone tools have been found in Mexico that suggest the existence of humans there around 23000 years ago.
- The highest mountain in Mexico is Pico de Orizaba, a dormant volcano that reaches 5,636 meters (18,491 ft) above sea level.
- The national symbol of Mexico is the golden eagle which features prominently on the coat of arms.
- The main language spoken in Mexico is Spanish.
- The largest source of immigration to the United States is from Mexico.
- Mexican food is known for its range of flavors and spices. Popular dishes include tacos, burritos and enchiladas.
- The most popular sport in Mexico is football (soccer). Mexico hosted the Football World Cup in both 1970 and 1986. Mexico City hosted the Summer Olympic Games in 1968.
- The flag is shows three bands in green, white and red. The emblem on the white ground shows an eagle standing on a cactus with a snake in the beak. The colors of the Mexican flag stand for independence, unity and religion. The legend describes, that the Aztec settled and built their capital city which they named Tenochtitlan, which is today Mexico City, on the place where they saw and eagle sitting on a cactus, eating a snake.
- Mexico is located on the North American continent and shares borders with the USA in the north and Belize and Guatemala in the south. The border between Mexico and the USA is the second longest border in the world and is about 3,155km/2,000 miles long.
- Mexico has mountains in the eastern and northern parts of the country, rainforests in the southern and eastern parts and deserts in the West. Most of the bigger cities are located in the southern parts of the country. There are low coastal plains, high-rugged mountains and a high tableau in the center of the country. The climate varies from tropical climate to desert climate. Mexico has four time zones!

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- Mexico is situated on the 'Ring of Fire', the world's most prominent volcano and earthquake region. However, the volcanos on Mexico's Baja California, a popular tourist destination, are mostly dormant. The peninsula to the west of mainland Mexico is called Baja California. Over 120 species of cactus are growing there.
- Mexico is one of the most bio-diverse countries on earth. The country has the most reptile species in the world housing over 700 reptile species and also has the second most (over 430) mammal species in the world.
- In Mexico, there are jaguars, pumas and huge iguanas. Whales, manta rays and manatees are common in the oceans and can sometimes be spotted off the Yucatan coast. In the jungles of southern Mexico, one can encounter various types of lizards, monkeys and colorful birds, such as parrots.
- Chocolate, chilies and corn come originally from Mexico.



Highlights in Mexican Arts and Culture:

- Most people in Mexico speak Spanish. Mexico is the country with the most Spanish speakers in the world. More people speak Spanish here than in Spain, because many more people live in Mexico and the country is also more than three times bigger.
- Mexicans are known as very friendly and welcoming foreigners and they are really fond of kids. Mariachi are the popular musicians who play folk music. They mainly use string instruments, but also trumpets are sometimes played. The groups are often invited to play at birthday parties, weddings and other family celebrations.
- Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico. The holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died, and help support their spiritual journey. On October 31, All Hallows Eve, the children make a children's altar to invite the *angelitos* (spirits of dead children) to come back for a visit. November 1 is All Saints Day, and the adult spirits will come to visit. November 2 is All Souls Day, when families go to the cemetery to decorate the graves and tombs of their relatives. The three-day fiesta filled with marigolds, the flowers of the dead; *muertos* (or pan de muerto - the bread of the dead); sugar skulls; cardboard skeletons; tissue paper decorations such as papel picado; fruit and nuts; incense, and other traditional foods and decorations.
- A common symbol of the holiday is the skull (in Spanish *calavera*), which celebrants represent in masks, called *calacas* (colloquial term for skeleton), and foods such as sugar or chocolate skulls, which are inscribed with the name of the recipient on the forehead. Sugar skulls can be given as gifts to both the living and the dead
- Papel picado literally means 'punched' or 'perforated' paper. This traditional cut paper folk art is found throughout Mexico and the former colonies of Spain as well as in the folk traditions of many other countries. The designs are commonly cut from as many as 40-50 colored tissue paper stacked together and using a guide or template, a small mallet, and chisels, creating as many as fifty banners at a time. Papel picado can also be made by folding tissue paper and using small, sharp scissors. Common themes include birds, floral designs, and skeletons. Papel picados are commonly displayed for both secular and religious occasions, such as Easter, Christmas, the Day of the Dead, as well as during weddings, quinceañeras, baptisms, and christenings. In Mexico, papel picados are often incorporated into the altars (*ofrendas*) during the Day of the Dead and are hung throughout the streets during holidays. In the streets of Mexico, papel picados are often strung together to create a banner that can either be hung across alleyways or displayed in the home.

