



CINCO  
DE MAYO  
MAY 5

# VIVA LA PIÑATA!

**CINCO DE MAYO** is a Mexican holiday that means “fifth of May.” The holiday commemorates the Mexican army’s victory at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Many people all over the United States celebrate this day that honors Mexican heritage. Piñatas are one of the many traditions enjoyed during celebrations. It is very easy to create your own piñata to celebrate.

Makes 1 piñata

## YOU WILL NEED

- 1 cup flour
- 2 cups water
- 10 to 20 sheets newspaper, plus more for the work surface
- 1 balloon
- Crepe or tissue paper in colors of your choice
- Scissors
- Small, sharp knife
- Large plastic needle
- Cotton string
- Serrated knife
- Glue
- 1 sheet 8½-by-11-in green construction paper
- 1 sheet 8½-by-11-in red construction paper
- 1 sheet 8½-by-11-in white paper
- Paper scraps in various colors
- Wrapped candies

**1** In a small saucepan, add the flour and water and stir until combined. The supervising adult should heat the mixture for 3 to 5 minutes, until it just begins to thicken. Remove from heat and pour into a plastic container to cool.

**2** While the mixture cools, tear the newspaper into strips. The strips should be about 2 by 2 inches, but they do not need to be exact.

**3** Inflate the balloon to about 4 inches diameter and tie it closed. This will be the main part of the piñata.

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**4** Cover a clean work surface with extra newspaper, because this part can get a little messy.

**5** Dip the newspaper strips into the paste mixture, one at a time, and use your fingers to wipe off excess paste. Place wet newspaper strips around the balloon. Repeat until the whole balloon is covered in one layer. Let dry for 15 minutes. Add another layer of papier-mâché, let dry for 15 minutes, and repeat for final layer. Set the piñata to dry on a piece of newspaper. You will be able to tell when it dries because the newspaper will look lighter and be dry to the touch. Turn the piñata once or twice to make sure it dries all over.

**6** Using scissors, cut 20 to 30 two-inch lengths of strips 1 to 2 inches wide.

**7** Using scissors, make small cuts about halfway across the width of each strip to turn it into fringe. Just make sure you don't cut all the way through the strip.

**8** When the piñata is dry, it is time to remove the balloon. While holding onto the knotted balloon tail pop the balloon and use the tail to pull it out of the top of the piñata. Then an adult should use the knife to make

two small cuts into the top of the piñata about 3 inches apart from one another. Thread the large plastic needle with the string and pass it through both slits. Tie the string into a loop for hanging.

**9** Beginning at the bottom or top of the piñata, apply a line of glue the length of one of the tissue-paper strips. Press a tissue-paper strip onto the glue, leaving the fringed part unattached. Apply another line of glue and tissue-paper strip slightly overlapping the first, but leaving the fringed part unattached. The fringe will hang over the previous strip, hiding the part that is not fringed. Repeat until the whole piñata is covered. Let dry completely.

**10** Using the green and red paper for the mouth and the white paper for the teeth, cut out the mouth and teeth using the templates on page 184. Cut eyes in the shape of your choice using the paper scraps. Sandwich the teeth between the green outer mouth and red inner mouth and glue together. Glue the eyes onto the piñata's face.

**11** An adult should cut a small flap in the lower back, using a serrated knife. Then the piñata can be filled with candy. This flap can be lifted to get the candy out without ever needing to break open your piñata.