

Mexican Folklórico & the Costumes Thereof

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Nuevo Leon

[German migrants, Texas Hill Country, & Tejano style]

Men

- Fringed coat (brown or black), usually leather or suede
- White or plaid patterned shirt
- Around the neck either a red bandana or a bolo tie
- Very American West cowboy. The first cowboys were Mexican, Tejano, and Black.

Women

- More evident German influence than the men
- Knee to Mid-calf length skirt
- Lacey/Frilly petticoat
- Browns, reds, and golds!
- High collar & lace bib piece over the chest and shoulders
- Synthetic hair rings w/ ribbons braided in



Folk dance appears around the world and much of the time what these performers wear becomes the most famous image of a nation or country. Mexico *folklorico* spans throughout the nation. Its regions are home to a variety of iconic looks that vary even more so within each subculture. The image of the many folk dresses of Mexico is unmistakable and rooted in both the indigenous cultures and the colonial Spanish ties of the nation, both of which can still be visually traced back today in modern *folklorico*. In no way are the following examples a comprehensive list of the types of *folklorico*. This will simply be the highlights of some of the most iconic and easily identifiable clothing that one may encounter when learning about Mexican folk dance.

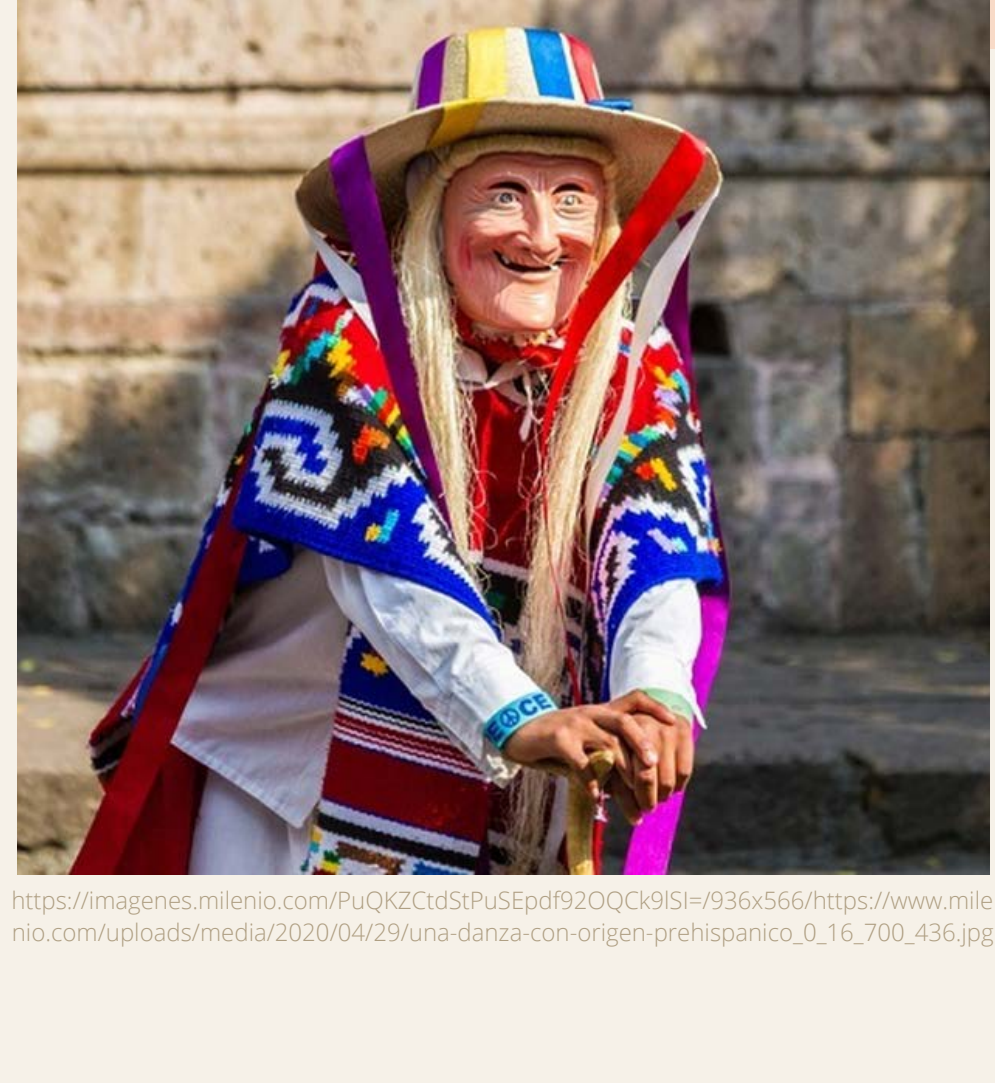
Proper *folklorico* dates all the way back to Mexico's War of Independence from Spain from about 1808 to 1821 and throughout the indigenous cultures and people of Mexico. But *folklorico* was never really the iconic image it is now known to be until the 1950's. This piece of culture was solidified as a national staple by the choreographer Amalia Hernandez, born in Mexico City. She had the idea to highlight traditional Mexican *folklorico* in a theatrical sense, similar to a ballet. In the 1950's she established the dance troupe Ballet Folklórico de Mexico which has become the most well known *folklorico* troupe in all of the nation. Since the troupe's birth, Amalia became an instructor, choreographer, figurehead, and ambassador of Mexican folk dance until her death in 2000.

All of the regions or countries of Mexico have distinct and differing styles of music, dance, and costume. It would be quite difficult to explore all of the options, cultures, or styles that currently and/or have existed within Mexico. So, here are just a handful of the wide variety that Mexican *folklorico* has to offer.

Michoacán

[La Danza de los Viejitos]

- Began in pre-Hispanic Michoacán, Purépecha people
- Spaniards banned it due to its ritualistic theme, but it turned into a satirical comedy performance directed at the Spanish
- Costume consists of:
 - Sarape (also Zarape) or Jorongo
 - White shirt and embroidered pants
 - Old man mask with white hair
 - Straw hat decorated with ribbons
 - Wooden cane and huaraches with wooden soles



Guerrero

[loose, boxy shape, detailed weave, & embroidery]

Men

- Really simple
- Similar to the Veracruz all white clothing
- Adds some embroidery to the neckline, and wrists

Women

- Two versions: Amuzgo and Acateca
- Amuzgo:
 - Untucked huipil
 - Woven in design
 - Worn long like a dress over simple skirt
- Acateca
 - Tucked huipil
 - Embroidered design
 - Black and blue skirt



Jalisco

[Mariachis, Charros, & bright vibrant colors]

Men

- Taken from Spanish riders
- Charro suits! Most people are familiar with Mariachis
- *Greca* and *botonadura* down the trousers and edges of the jacket and vest
- *Chaquetilla* or bolero jacket. Very Spanish.
- Silk bow tie and sombrero to top it off

Women

- Women can be mariachis too! All female mariachi bands are a big thing.
- Can wear a straight skirt version or trousers, although skirts are more popular
- Same layers, décor, and design
- Forgoes the sombrero for slicked back ponytail and ribbon
- Taken from Spanish styles, but made more accessible in rural areas
- Silk --> cotton
- Woven designs --> sewn on ribbons
- Incredibly wide color variation
- Starburst pattern is a popular decoration



Veracruz

[all white, floaty and elegant, & large Spanish influence]

Men

- All linen
- The guayabera
- Red silk tie, sometimes patterned

Women

- 4 pieces
 - Lace shawl
 - Tank top-like blouse
 - Wide lace skirt
 - Black embroidered apron
- Some dances accompanied with a hand fan and bead necklaces
- Hair wrapped up, braided with ribbon and 3 large flowers

