

ANNEX

CULTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE HANGING GARDENS: MEXICAN ROOTS FLORAL DISPLAY

CORN



Beyond just being a staple crop, corn has deep meaning in Mexican culture. When corn was first domesticated is still being argued, but it is indisputable that corn was first domesticated in Mexico between 8,500 to 10,000 years ago. To Mexicans, corn represents life, and its harvest cycle is closely tied to the cycle of life.

The ancestor of corn is teosinte, a grass-like plant with a hard shell surrounding its grain. Protected by its hard shell, teosinte is not commonly consumed although it is widely used as a forage crop for cattle. The

stalk can be chewed to extract its sweet juice. The hard shell of the teosinte disappeared when a genetic mutation occurred, and the ancient civilisations of Mexico took advantage of this trait to domesticate it for its grain, developing it over the years to the corn that we are familiar with today.

MEXICAN FOLK ART

Seed mosaics



Seed mosaics are a traditional Mexican art form often seen during harvest festivals and ceremonies. Seeds, beans or pulses of various sizes and colours are used to create intricate images on streets and pavements.

The beauty of the mosaic is not only in its design, but also in its transience. As the seeds, beans and pulses are often loosely laid out, these mosaics are not intended to last. In Mexican culture, this is an analogy for the fleetingness of life, and how one must enjoy the moment.

Seeds, beans and pulses from Mexico are used for the seven seed mosaic art medallions in the Hanging Gardens – Mexican Roots floral display.

Floral arch



The elaborate floral arch is often erected at the entrances of Mexican towns, churches and even weddings. To welcome visitors to the Hanging Gardens – Mexican Roots floral display, a festive floral arch measuring 8m across and 5m in height sits at the entrance of Flower Dome.

This floral arch is the work of third-generation artisan Mario Arturo Aguilar Gutierrez. Along with two assistants, they have travelled to Singapore from the town of Iztacalco in Mexico City to build the floral arch on-site at Gardens by the Bay.

Flowers are ever-present in the daily life of Mexicans from the earliest indigenous communities; from birth, in their celebrations, and even in death. This significance of flowers can be traced back to the agriculture practiced in the chinampas (floating gardens) located in the Valley of Mexico (also known as the Valley of Anahuac, an Aztec word), where natives planted both corn and flowers before the arrival of the Spaniards.

Floral arches that decorate entrances indicate the place is dressed for a festival. These floral arches, which symbolise gratitude and devotion, are also made by the residents of villages as an offering to the patron saints. This traditional folk art is a manifestation of the syncretism of ancient ways of celebrating the deities within the Catholic calendar.

In some villages, the floral arch can also be made of fresh seasonal fruit, seeds, and sweets to indicate that it is a fiesta. The vivid colours of the floral arch are an example of the use of multicolours that can be found in any expression of Mexican folk art, and in every corner of Mexico's vast territory.

The floral arch in Flower Dome, includes in its design hummingbirds and butterflies, which are biodiversity of particular importance to Mexicans, not only because they are common in Mexico, but because they are pollinators of flowers and plants – a fundamental element of the creation of new life.

ICONS OF MEXICO'S ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

Chac Mool



Chac Mool is a distinct form of a Mesoamerican statue of a reclining figure, often on a rectangular base. Its head faces 90 degrees to the left or right from the front, its body is supported with bent knees and elbows, and its arm is holding on to a bowl at the torso or belly. The bowl serves as a vessel for sacrificial offerings ranging from tamales and tortillas to tobacco, flowers and colourful feathers. Several Chac Mool were found in different excavations in and around Mexico City and important archaeological sites at Tula and Chichén Itzá.

Chichén Itzá



Located in the eastern part of the Yucatán state in Mexico, the city of Chichén Itzá boasts a wealth of dense architecture, reminiscent of its reputation as a significant regional capital in the North Maya Lowlands during the Late Classic Period (c. AD 600 – AD 900) to the Terminal Classic Period (c. AD 800 – AD 900).

Its prime location allowed for economic opportunities in the lucrative trade route and the surrounding cenotes (natural sinkholes), which contained water all year round, made it attractive for settlements. In modern times, it is one of the most visited archaeological sites in Mexico and has gone through extensive restoration to preserve the authenticity of its architecture.

All these elements contributed to Chichén Itzá being selected as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007. Among the vast types of architecture, one of the noticeable ones is El Castillo, known as the Temple of Kukulcán, a Mesoamerican-style step-pyramid built for the deity Kukulcán, a feathered snake spirit to the Yucatán Mayans.

Double-headed serpent



The Maquizcoatl, more popularly known as the double-headed serpent, is of great mystical significance in ancient Mexico's history. No zoological specimens of this creature have ever been recorded. In Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, coatl means both "serpent" and "twin". Serpents are extensively featured in all Aztec art – it serves as an important symbol as the shedding of the serpent's skin represents regeneration, new life and fertility.

For the 18m-long double-headed serpent in the Hanging Gardens – Mexican Roots floral display, 3,000 tillandsias have been carefully hand-tied to the frame of the serpent's body. These epiphytic air plants native to Southwestern USA, Mexico and South America come in various shapes and sizes and are well-liked for their versatile nature, as they are also used as ornamental houseplants.

Olmec head



expressive facial details.

The artwork of the Olmec civilisation is considered the most striking in ancient America. The widely recognised Olmec heads are massive stone monuments that can be as tall as 3m, have a circumference of 4.5m and weigh up to 8 tonnes (8,000kg). Seventeen heads have been discovered in two of the most vital centres of Olmec civilisation, the archaeological sites of San Lorenzo and La Venta. The colossal head is known to be carved out of a single basalt boulder and hand sculpted using stones, while reeds and wet sand were used to achieve true-to-life and

Quetzalcóatl



Quetzalcóatl is one of the most significant gods in ancient Mesoamerica, commonly present among several Mesoamerican civilisations. Its name is made up of a combination of two Nahuatl words – quetzal, meaning “emerald plumed bird”, and coatl, meaning “serpent”.

The feathered serpent of early Teotihuacán, symbolising a deity of water, fertility and agriculture, became intertwined and identified later with Quetzalcóatl, taking on the beliefs of the civilisations of Xochicalco, Tajín, Cholula,

the Mayan, Toltecs and Aztecs. Quetzalcóatl was a cultural hero, a prophet, the creator of life and humankind, a wizard, the god that gave corn to people. For the Aztecs, the revered creator god is also known to bring winds and rain, which is essential for agriculture.

A carving at the archeological site of La Venta is the earliest surviving representation of Quetzalcóatl from the Olmec civilisation. More depictions are found in the six-tiered pyramid built in his honour at Teotihuacán. The feathered serpent is often represented in architectural sculptural decorations.

Tula giants



Visible on the horizon of the ancient city of Tula, Hidalgo in present-day Mexico, these large, giant statues stand atop the Temple of Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, also known as the Temple of the Morning Star or House of the Morning Star.

Weighing several tonnes each and standing over 4.6m tall, these stone-carved statues provide valuable insight into the Toltec civilisation. Snakeskin and feathers adorn the headdresses, while butterfly-shaped breastplates, weapons and shields on the backs make up the

attires carved into the statues. Modern archaeologists surmise that the statues were warriors that belong to Quetzalcóatl, the Aztec feathered serpent god, due to the feather and snakeskin decor and the butterfly breastplates.

While archaeologists are still uncertain about the exact purpose of the statues within the Mesoamerican context, they have deduced that the statues likely supported a roof at the top of the temple, like pillars or columns.

MEXICAN CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

From Mexican films, to demonstrations of Mexican cuisine by Latin chefs, to dance and music performances, celebrate the vibrant and lively culture of Mexico at Gardens by the Bay with a slew of programmes for the public in September curated by the Embassy of Mexico in Singapore.

All programmes are free, but pre-registration is required for some events. For registration details and the most updated information, visit www.gardensbythebay.com.sg/hanginggardens.

PROGRAMME	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Culinary Demonstrations			
Let's Chilli Out & Salsa Together	Sep 3	1pm	Waterview Room
From Mexico with Love		3pm	
It's Nieves Time, Ice Cream – Mexican Style!		5pm	
Choco & Cacao	Sep 4	1pm	
How Tex is your Mex?		3pm	
We Love Street Makan		5pm	
Dance and Music			
Dance of the Four Elements by Mexican Folkloric Ballet of Singapore	Sep 3, Sep 4	2pm, 4pm	Behind Floral Clock
Ireson Latin Band			Flower Field Hall
Mexican Film Festival			
Ana and Bruno	Sep 3	10am	Flower Field Hall
A Costume for Nicolás	Sep 4	10am	
Cosmic Twins	Sep 3, Sep 4	12.30pm	

CULINARY DEMONSTRATIONS

Let's Chilli Out & Salsa Together

By Chef Luis Rodríguez

Learn the exciting recipes for traditional Mexican chilli sauces. You will get to taste the salsa at the end of the demonstration.

Date: Sep 3 (Sat)

Time: 1pm

From Mexico with Love

By Chef Tamara Chávez

Discover the culinary universe that native Mexican ingredients introduced to the world.



Date: Sep 3 (Sat)
Time: 3pm

It's Nieves Time, Ice Cream – Mexican Style!

By Chef Sebastián Álvarez

“Nieves” is the Mexican way of making ice cream. Come and learn the secrets of this technique and taste the ice cream at the end of the demonstration!

Date: Sep 3 (Sat)
Time: 5pm

Choco & Cacao

By Chef Tamara Chávez

Did you know that chocolate comes from Mexico? Learn the unique ways to use chocolate and how Mexicans view this incredible ingredient.

Date: Sep 4 (Sun)
Time: 1pm

How Tex is your Mex?

By Chef Daniel Chávez

Love it or hate it? The difference between Tex-Mex and traditional Mexican food.

Date: Sep 4 (Sun)
Time: 3pm

We Love Street Makan

By Chef Tamara Chávez

Just like many countries in Asia, Mexico is one of the biggest places in the world when it comes to street food. Let us show you the incredible variety of dishes you can find on the streets of Mexico.

Date: Sep 4 (Sun)
Time: 5pm

ABOUT THE CHEFS

Chef Sebastián Álvarez

Born and raised in Mexico City, Sebastián Álvarez is launching his first formal culinary project, Tlaxoa. His interest in food was shaped by his experience with Mexico City's street food scene, which planted the idea in his mind that everyday dishes can be delicious, and that fantastic food should be available for everybody to experience. It is this very idea that made him want to share traditional Mexican dishes with all of Singapore's residents and showcase the richness and diversity of his country's gastronomy. It also led him to embark on a nine-month journey focused exclusively on traditional Mexican cuisine, dishes, and techniques by way of a specialization program in the Mexican Gastronomy School (ESGAMEX), Mexico's oldest and most respected culinary school dedicated to the research, promotion and preservation of traditional Mexican gastronomy.

Chef Daniel Chávez

Peruvian Daniel Chavez's 20 year career has taken him across continents, from Barcelona where he joined Can Fabes, helmed by the late culinary icon Santi Santamaria, to becoming Chef de Cuisine of Ossiano at Atlantis, The Palm Hotel in Dubai, and later Chef de Cuisine of Santi at the Marina Bay Sands Hotel in Singapore. In 2012, he opened his first personal project OLA Cocina del Mar, followed



in 2017 with Peruvian TONO Cevicheria and TONITO, Latin American Kitchen at the Jewel Changi Airport. In 2018, Daniel created LATINADA, Latin America's First Food Festival in Singapore, and as of 2021, is the chef-owner of CANCHITA Peruvian Cuisine. As a proud ambassador of Latin American gastronomy, Daniel devotes his time to working with his wife and fellow chef Tamara Chávez to showcase the culinary diversity and traditions of Peru and the continent in Asia.

Chef Tamara Chávez

With 14 years of international culinary experience under her belt, Mexican-born Tamara Chavez started her career in the traditional restaurants of Mexico City, and moved to Singapore in 2014 as part of the opening team of Mexican fine dining restaurant El Mero Mero. Thereafter, she took on the position of Head Chef at TONO Cevicheria and subsequently OLA Cocina Del Mar. Fuelled by her passion to promote Latin American gastronomy and culture in her adopted home, Tamara helped launch LATINADA in 2018, Singapore's first Latin American Festival. In 2021, Tamara became Head Chef of CANCHITA Peruvian Cuisine and was named finalist for the Female Chef of the Year awarded by the World Gourmet Awards in 2021 and 2022.

Chef Luis Rodríguez

Born in the heart of Mexico City, Luis Rodríguez started out working in diverse projects with well-known chefs of the Latin world. In 2000, he set out to expand his horizons and landed in France to work in Le Canard sur le Toit. In 2012, he arrived in the country of food lovers, Singapore. He joined the Grupo Ventura company and worked to develop concepts such as Senor Taco Clarke Quay, El Mero Mero and Senor Taco Chijmes among others, gaining the title of Culinary Director. In 2021, he took over La Mexicana as the General Manager, and has led diverse projects to promote not only the authentic flavours of Mexico but also Mexican culture. He made his mark in the world of Latin cuisine in Singapore through highlighting trending Mexican techniques and ingredients.

DANCE AND MUSIC

Dance of the Four Elements by Mexican Folkloric Ballet of Singapore

Mexican dance is the heritage and philosophical, cultural, spiritual and artistic legacy of the Aztec people. This representation aims to honour the gods and form a bond with the cosmos. It begins with a greeting to the four main cardinal points, and then a dance of the four elements of fire, earth, water and wind, to express thanks and bless the harvest and fertility of the earth.

Date: Sep 3 and Sep 4 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 2pm and 4pm

Ireson Latin band

Mexican pianist and composer Alina Ramirez and bassist, guitarist, composer and arranger Mario Lopez founded the group in 1991. Ireson's music is a mix of Afro Latin rhythms such as danzonete, son, bomba, samba and bossa nova, and Mexican and Cuban folkloric music with a contemporary vibe.

Date: Sep 3 and Sep 4 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 2pm and 4pm

MEXICAN FILM FESTIVAL

Ana and Bruno (PG13)

Director: Carlos Carrera

Genre: Animation

Ana is a peculiar little girl who escapes from a mental institution to search for her father in order to save her mother. With the help of a group of weird and funny fantastic beings that she meets in the clinic, she embarks on a journey full of thrilling and moving adventures. Based on the novel Ana, by Daniel Emil.

Date: Sep 3 (Sat)

Time: 10am

A Costume for Nicolás (PG)

Director: Eduardo Rivero.

Genre: Animation / Fantasy

Nicolás is a 10-year-old boy with Down's syndrome. Every year, to celebrate his birthday, his mother makes him a costume. He has been a monkey, a brave pirate, a giant dragon; anything that could complement his infinite imagination. Unfortunately, his mother passes away and Nicolás ends up living with his grandparents Mia and Tomas, and his cousin David, who has nightmares. Nicolás has only one memory of his mother – an old trunk filled with his magical costumes. With those costumes, Nicolás sets forth on an adventure to save his cousin David amidst a kingdom immersed in chaos.

Date: Sep 4 (Sun)

Time: 10am

Cosmic Twins (PG)

Director: Alejandro Voorduin

Genre: Animation / Fantasy

In this short film that blends Mayan lore with Southeast Asian traditions, the sculptures of Mexican artist Jorge Marín are transformed into animated puppets in the tradition of wayang kulit, to tell the story of the brothers Hun and Vucub Hunahpú, who shake the universe playing ball. The story of the brothers is based on a passage on the emergence of the world and the creation of man in Popol Vuh, a sacred book of Mayan literature.

Date: Sep 3 and Sep 4 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 12.30pm



HANGING GARDENS – MEXICAN ROOTS GET CRAFTY! ACTIVITIES

In collaboration with the Mexican Association in Singapore (MEXASING), the latest series of Gardens by the Bay's Get Crafty! activities will tie in with various elements of the Hanging Gardens – Mexican Roots floral display. These activities will be held in Flower Dome.

MEXASING is a non-profit association whose main objective is to promote Mexican traditions through events, workshops, and cultural exchanges, in support of private and government organisations such as the Mexican Embassy in Singapore.

For more information, visit www.gardensbythebay.com.sg/hanginggardens.

Aztec Plume with Feathers Activity

The ancient Aztecs viewed feathers as one of nature's most valuable gifts, given that birds were seen to be very important in their culture. The Aztecs would use brightly coloured feathers in headdresses worn by their leaders, in shields used for battle, and as a general adornment. In this activity, you will be taught how to design and create your very own Aztec plume with feathers. Materials include foam, feathers, velcro, tape and special figures, which will be provided.

Date: Aug 27 and Aug 28 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 10am – 6pm (15 min per participant)

Cost: \$15* per kit (inclusive of activity materials)

Venue: Flower Dome's Australian Garden (No pre-registration is required. Interested participants may head directly to the venue. Admission to Flower Dome is excluded from the cost.)

Olmec Head with Seeds Activity

Did you know that the Olmecs were one of the first inhabitants of the Americas to construct monumental architecture and to settle in towns and cities? Olmec heads are a distinctive feature of the Olmec civilisation of ancient Mesoamerica. In this activity, you will learn the technique applied to the colossal Olmec heads in the floral display and make a replica using seeds brought from Mexico, such as corn and four different kinds of beans (black, green, red and yellow). All materials will be provided for this activity.

Date: Sep 10 and Sep 11 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 10am – 6pm (15 min per participant)

Cost: \$15* per kit (inclusive of activity materials)

Venue: Flower Dome's Australian Garden (No pre-registration is required. Interested participants may head directly to the venue. Admission to Flower Dome is excluded from the cost.)

Mexican Flower Brooch Activity

Flowers occupy a central place in many popular festivals and traditions in Mexico. They have also been used to express feelings and desires in many important Mexican cultural rituals. In this activity, you will make your own brooch using the flowers featured in Hanging Gardens – Mexican Roots. These unique flowers were specially made in Mexico by the same local artists who created the floral arch in Flower Dome. All materials will be provided for this activity.

Date: Sep 24 and Sep 25 (Sat and Sun)



Time: 10am – 6pm (15 min per participant)

Cost: \$10* per kit (inclusive of activity materials)

Venue: Flower Dome's Australian Garden (No pre-registration is required. Interested participants may head directly to the venue. Admission to Flower Dome is excluded from the cost.)



NEW FLOWER DOME ONLY MEMBERSHIP

Enjoy unlimited visits to Flower Dome for a full year, as well as complimentary two-hour parking and first dibs on exclusive privileges, invites to special events and seasonal, changing floral displays for only \$29*, with the new Flower Dome only membership.

Membership privileges include:

- Unlimited admission to Flower Dome to enjoy the seasonal changing floral displays
- Complimentary parking for the first two hours (Not applicable for Child/Student membership)
- Exclusive privileges at Gardens by the Bay's gift shops and dining establishments
- Members-only invites to unique experiences, events and workshops
- Welcome e-Vouchers

TYPE OF FLOWER DOME ONLY MEMBERSHIP*	COST
Adult	\$29
Senior	\$19
Child	\$19
Student	\$19
Family (2 adults + 3 children)	\$88
Family Plus (Up to 5 pax, no age restriction)	\$108

Offer is valid until 17 Oct 2022. Visit <http://www.gardensbythebay.com.sg/promotions> for more details.