

# Hispanic Heritage Month Timeline

## 1859

Cigar factories built in Florida, Louisiana and New York brought an influx of working-class Cubans to the growing industry in the United States.

## 1865

U.S. Navy Seaman Philip Bazaar became the first Hispanic Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. Bazaar carried dispatch communications between soldiers onshore and the USS Santiago de Cuba during the assault on Fort Fisher off the coast of North Carolina.

## 1867

After the fall of the French monarchy, Mexico entered the Restored Republic led by President Benito Juárez, the first Indigenous Mexican president.

## 1880-1900

The 1880 census counted 333,000 people who could be identified as Hispanic, rising to 496,000 in 1900, roughly three-quarters of them born in the United States.

## 1910

The Mexican Revolution began as a revolt against President Porfirio Díaz. The railroads that had once served as a means for trade and development now served as the main escape from the violence of the revolution.



## 1914

The Panama Canal officially opened on Aug. 15, completed at the cost of more than \$350 million.



## 1918

The Hispanic American Historical Review printed its first issue. Latin American historians who felt the American Historical Association had marginalized their cultures sought to create an institutional structure that would provide a scholarly journal to examine Latin American history.

## 1928

Octaviano Larrazolo, a former New Mexico governor, became the first Mexican American U.S. Senator. He succeeded Andrieus Jones after winning the election to complete Jones' term while serving in the New Mexico State House of Representatives.

## 1929-1939

Supported by the U.S. Federal Government, cities and states conducted large-scale deportations of Mexican and Mexican American residents to Mexico. Roughly 355,000 to 2 million people were deported, including 60% who were first-generation U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, mainly children.

## 1942

World War II drastically changed U.S. views and policies toward Mexican immigration. The governments of the U.S. and Mexico jointly created the bracero (laborer) program, which encouraged Mexicans to come to the U.S. as contract workers to support wartime industries.

## 1947

The *Mendez v. Westminster School District* case sued four school districts for denying students entrance to Westminster Elementary School because they were Mexican. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals prohibited segregation in California public schools.

## 1952

Puerto Rico proclaimed its constitution and was approved by the United States Congress, officially establishing a formal government structure to include a legislative branch, an elected governor and a judicial system based on civil liberties.

## 1954

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Mexican Americans have equal protection under the law in *Hernandez v. State of Texas*.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower instituted a controversial program known as "Operation Wetback" in which the U.S. government detained and deported more than 1 million people. Rhetoric blaming immigrants for low wages led to the policy, which would only last a few months due to funding and a lack of support after agriculture was severely disrupted.

## 1959

Musicians Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly and "The Big Bopper" J.P. Richardson died in a plane crash. Valens was the first Mexican-American rock and roll star, scoring four hit records in his eight-month-long career.

## 1962

Civil rights activists César Chávez and Dolores Huerta established the National Farm Workers Association

to advocate for migrant workers' rights. In the 1960s, it became the United Farm Workers of America.

## 1963

The last baseball game ever played at New York's historic Polo Grounds was the first and only Hispanic All-Star Game. Hall of Famers such as Roberto Clemente, Orlando Cepeda, Luis Aparicio and Juan Marichal were all featured in the game.

## 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, sex, religion, color or national origin. The act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce federal job discrimination laws.



## 1965

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, better known as the Hart-Celler Act. The reform bill ended the quota system that allotted immigration opportunities based on country of origin. The act gave priority to highly skilled immigrants and those with families already living in America.

## 1968

Led by East L.A. teacher Sal Castro, about 10,000 students peacefully walked out of four schools, joined by parents and supporters. Police intervention sparked a riot, and the walkouts persisted for two weeks until demands were met. Soon after the HemisFair opening in San Antonio, Chicano students initiated walkouts, spreading to 100 high schools in 10 states via 39 Texas towns.

## 1973

After the U.S. government recognized "Hispanic," Miami embraced Spanish as its second official language, forming a bilingual department. Maurice A. Ferré later became the first Hispanic mayor of Miami and the first Puerto Rican to lead a major U.S. mainland city.

## 1975

The Voting Rights Act of 1975 made bilingual ballots a requirement in many areas.

## 1980

Fidel Castro announced that any Cuban who wished to leave may do so. Shortly after, Cuban Americans sailed from South Florida to the port of Mariel in droves to help those who wanted to leave, an event often referred to as the Mariel Boatlift. Over a period of five months, more than 125,000 Cubans arrived in South Florida.

## 1986

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities was founded to champion higher education for Hispanic students.

The Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR) was founded to advance the inclusion of Hispanic professionals in corporate America.

President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, granting permanent legal status to 2.7 million immigrants but also increasing border security and deeming it illegal for employers to hire unauthorized workers knowingly.

## 1987

The National Hispanic Leadership Institute addressed the lack of representation of Latinas in corporations, politics and nonprofits.

## 1988

Dr. Lauro Cavazos became the first Hispanic to serve in a presidential cabinet when he was sworn in as Secretary of Education by Vice President George H.W. Bush.

## 1989

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen became the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress.

## 1990

Antonia C. Novello became the first woman and Hispanic surgeon general of the U.S.

## 1995

Dreaming of You, the posthumous album by Selena, became the first predominantly Spanish-language album to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

## 1993

Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman to go to space.



## 1999

California's controversial 1994 ballot measure called Prop 187, which sought to stop illegal immigrants from receiving benefits or public services in the state, was struck down by a federal court mediation. Judges labeled most of it as unconstitutional, declaring that the state cannot regulate immigration and that no child will be deprived of education or healthcare due to their place of birth.

## 2001

Representative Luis Gutiérrez proposed the first version of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, granting citizenship to those who entered the U.S. undocumented as children.

## 2003

Hispanics became the nation's largest minority group yet remained underrepresented in workforce leadership.

## 2007

America Ferrera became the first Latina to win Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for her role in "Ugly Betty."



## 2008

Lin-Manuel Miranda's "In the Heights" won the Tony Award for Best Musical. Miranda produced the equally successful "Hamilton."

## 2009

Puerto Rican Sonia Sotomayor became the first Latina Supreme Court Justice.

Richard Gonzalez became the CEO of AbbVie, achieving status as one of the highest-paid CEOs without completing a college degree.

## 2012

The Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) began under President Obama. It allowed those who entered the U.S. undocumented as children to have eligibility for a work permit and a two-year deferred action from deportation.

## 2017

"Day Without Immigrants" protests took place across the nation to show the government how valuable immigrants are to the economy. These protests received widespread media attention and increased awareness about immigration issues.

Geisha Williams, a Cuban American businesswoman, became the first Latina Fortune 500 CEO when she was promoted at PG&E.

## 2018

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez beat Joe Crowley, a longtime representative of New York's 14th congressional district. At 29 years old, she became the youngest woman ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.

## 2019

Cardi B became the first solo female rapper to win the Grammy for Best Rap Album.

## 2020

The Supreme Court blocked efforts to end DACA, ensuring that 700,000 young immigrants can work and study in the U.S. without fear of deportation.

18.7 million voters (around 1 in every 10 voters nationwide) were of Latin American descent in 2020, with a historic 53.7% of the Hispanic population eligible to vote. For the first time in the history of U.S. presidential elections, Latinos born in the U.S. voted at the same rate as naturalized citizens.

## 2021

U.S. Census Data revealed that the Hispanic population of Texas is now equal to the white population of the state before accounting for undocumented immigrants. This signaled a shift in the state's demographic makeup as Hispanic voters and consumers became the majority.

## 2022

Nicaraguan-born political commentator Ana Navarro officially became the co-host of the popular morning talk show "The View." She celebrated the designation by delivering an impassioned speech about representation on screen, an issue that persists for the Latinx community in America.

Karol G, a Colombian Reggaeton artist, was the first Latina to headline Lollapalooza. Her album, *Mañana Será Bonito* was the first fully Spanish-language album by a female artist to top the Billboard 200 chart. Karol G's *\$trip Love Tour* was also the highest U.S. grossing ever by a female Latin act at nearly \$70 million.



Former WNBA player Niesha Butler opened NYC's first Afro-Latina-owned STEM center, S.T.E.A.M. CHAMPS. Focused on engaging and inspiring youths, Butler aimed to enhance accessibility to STEM education.

## 2023

Edward Caban was named NYPD commissioner, becoming the first Latino to lead the nation's largest police department.



Patricia Guerrero was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, making her the court's first Latina chief justice.

Meg Medina, a Cuban American novelist, was selected by the Library of Congress as the new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. She is the first Latina to serve as National Ambassador in the program's history.

Global superstar Shakira was honored as Billboard's Woman of the Year at the first-ever *Mujeres Latinas en la Música*, or Latin Women in Music, gala.