



Mexico's most famous military victory took place on the morning of May 5th, 1862. On that day, about 4,000 Mexican soldiers fought off and drove back the much larger French army at the village of Puebla, Mexico.

The French, along with Spanish and English troops, landed in Mexico to help collect debts from President Benito Juárez. The English and Spanish made deals and left, but the French stayed because they had designs on the Mexican empire. They marched from the port of Vera Cruz, intending to attack Mexico City to the west. The Calvary, led by Colonel Díaz, who would later become Mexico's president and dictator, went out to meet the French, who were unable to overcome them. The French militia tried to overcome the Mexican militia who were on foot, but a serendipitous thunderstorm frightened hundreds of cattle in the area, who started to stampede, helping to drive the French away.

Cinco de Mayo is an annual holiday celebrating that victory, as well as Mexican freedom and liberty. Cinco de Mayo is celebrated throughout Mexico, as well as in parts of the United States. States with large populations of people with a Mexican heritage, like Texas and Southern California, frequently celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

Fun Facts:

- Cinco de Mayo means 5th of May in Spanish. It is the anniversary of a battle that took place between the Mexicans and the French in 1862.
- Mexico had many rich natural resources and gold, which made them vulnerable to other nations that wanted to take advantage of these riches.
- The battle is known as the Battle of Puebla. This victory also marks a turning point in Mexican national pride. A small, poorly armed group of about 4,500 men were able to stop the invasion of a well-equipped French army that had about 6,500 or even 8,000 soldiers. Their success helped Mexican people feel very proud and helped create a feeling of national unity. While Cinco de Mayo is a national holiday in Mexico, it is mainly observed in the state capital of Puebla. However, in the United States, it is becoming a popular holiday to celebrate Mexican culture.
- On May 9th, 1862, Mexican President Benito Juárez declared a national holiday called The Battle of Puebla Day or Battle of Cinco de Mayo.