

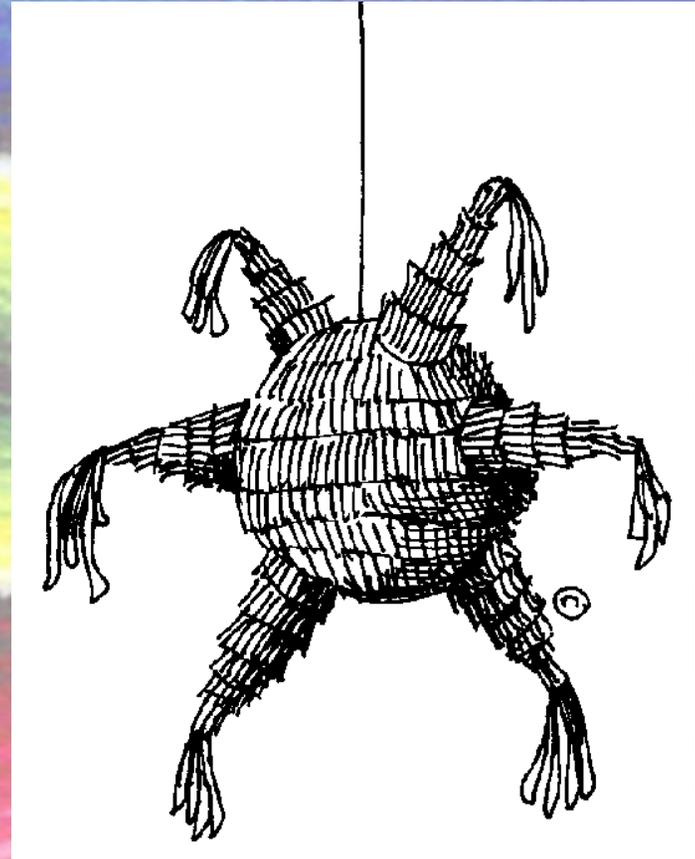
Piñatas



“The” Latino Party Game

The History of the Piñata

- The original, traditional shape of the *piñata* is the six pointed star
- The center was a clay pot or *olla de barro* and filled with candy or prizes
- It is hung from a line while children swing at it with a stick and others sing the piñata song



The Piñata Song



- *Dale, dale, dale,
No pierdas el tino
Porque si lo pierdes,
pierdes el camino.*
- *Hit it, hit it, hit it,
Don't loose your aim.
'cause if you lose it,
you'll loose your way!*

Making a Piñata



Four Steps to Fun!

Making a Piñata by Catherine Fournier

The feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 is celebrated in Mexico and the United States. On this feast day, large processions enter the beautiful basilica in Mexico City with flowers, banners, and singing meant to symbolize the singing of birds heard by Juan Diego at the first apparition of Mary.

It is a special feast day for families too. Families gather together for parties at which Mexican food and piñatas are featured. Children love piñatas for several reasons. First, they are bright and colorful. Second, they are full of candy and small prizes. Third, normal rules of behavior encouraging sharing and gentleness are suspended and the children are allowed to scramble for as much candy as they can reach. Fourth, it's something that they are allowed to break! They can hit it as hard as they want!

Piñatas are easy to make, though they require a few days and some planning ahead. This is always difficult, especially at this time of year, but the results are worth it!



To make a good sized piñata, you will need:

A LARGE round balloon or beach ball

A good pile of old newspapers

White glue or flour and water to make a paste

Scissors

Tape (regular or masking)

Thin cardboard

Crayons, markers, poster paint

Tissue paper or construction paper

String or yarn

A craft knife



Goodies to fill the Piñata - this should include candy of course, but also could include holy cards, medals, and other small items like balls, pencils, toy cars, stamps and stamp pads, and anything else that catches your imagination.

Step One

Spread newspapers or plastic sheeting over your work surface. Blow up the balloon or beach ball and tie a knot at the end. Tear newspapers into strips about 1 inch wide and about 6 inches long. Tearing rather than cutting is important, it helps the strips lie flat on top of each other. Pour some of the glue into a disposable bowl or a bowl you don't mind soaking in water for a long while, or mix flour and cold water to make a paste the consistency of thick glue. Dip the newspaper strips into the glue and spread them onto the balloon. Thoroughly cover the balloon, leaving a small hole at the top to remove the balloon and fill the piñata. Let the first layer dry.

Step Two

Repeat Step One two more times, until the papier mache is built up to a good thickness. Next day if the paper feels dry when you touch it, then wrap the balloon with the yarn to give it strength to hold when swinging it. Add another two layers of glue and newspapers. Let it dry for another day. Remove the balloon.

Decorating the Piñata:

Traditional shapes for the piñata include donkeys, fish and birds. Roll the cardboard to make legs and a head for the donkey, then build up the shape with more papier mache. Shape a cone for the head and tail of a fish, then add fins and eyes. Use additional layers of papier mache to make it more 'fish like'. A similar technique will create a bird body, onto which can then be added wings, legs and a tail. When the shape is finished and dry, fill the piñata with candy and goodies, and cover the hole with a few layers of paper.

A simpler piñata can be made as a ball with decorated papier mache cones sticking out all over it. Paper streamers hang from the cones.

Then paint the piñata. Piñatas should be bright and colorful. Crepe paper streamers cut up with a fringe can be curled up with the help of the pencil, and glued onto the piñata. Start from the bottom and layer them overlapping. Decorate the cones with the crepe paper, adding strings to the tips.

Playing the Piñata Game.

Hang the piñata up from the ceiling. Each child gets a turn trying to break the piñata. Blindfold the child and give them a stick (a broom handle works well). Turn the child around in a circle 2 or 3 times and point him or her in the direction of the piñata. The child gets to swing the stick 2 or 3 times. Make sure everyone else stands clear of the swinging stick, including the grown-ups!!! Then another child gets a turn. When someone breaks the piñata, all the children get to gather the goodies. You might want to have little paper bags with each child's name on them so the kids have a place to store their goodies for the remainder of the party and a way to carry everything home.

