



National Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated from September 15 through October 15, recognizes and celebrates the history, presence, and contributions of the many (currently 56.6 million!) Latinos living in the United States. National Hispanic Heritage Month was first established as a weeklong celebration by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded it to a month-long celebration.

On September 15, many countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, celebrate their independence, and other countries like Mexico, celebrate their independence on September 16, and Chile on the 18th.

**Learn about some of the most independent, courageous, innovative, and successful Latina women who have helped pave the way for future generations to come.**



**Isabelle Allende**

Age: 79

Roots: Chilean

Isabel Allende—novelist, feminist, and philanthropist—is one of the most widely read authors in the world, having sold more than 75 million books. Chilean born in Peru, Isabel won worldwide acclaim in 1982 with the publication of her first novel, *The House of the Spirits*, which began as a letter to her dying grandfather. Since then, she has authored more than twenty-five bestselling and critically acclaimed books, including *Daughter of Fortune*, *Island beneath the Sea*, *Paula*, *The Japanese Lover*, *A Long Petal of the Sea* and her most recent memoir, *The Soul of a Woman*. Translated into more than forty-two languages, Allende's works entertain and educate readers by interweaving imaginative stories with significant historical events. In addition to her work as a writer, Allende devotes much of her time to human rights causes. In 1996, following the death of her daughter Paula, she established a charitable foundation in her honor, which has awarded grants to

more than 100 nonprofits worldwide, delivering life-changing care to hundreds of thousands of women and girls. More than 8 million have watched her TED Talks on leading a passionate life.



**Name: Berta Cáceres**

Age: 44

Roots: Honduran

Berta Cáceres was a Lenca indigenous from La Esperanza, Honduras who for over 20 years, she was on the frontline defending indigenous territory and rights. Berta was the co-founder and general coordinator of the Consejo Civico de Organizaciones Indigenas Populares – COPINH (Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organizations. Her activists had her face off and often win against illegal loggers, plantation owners, multinational corporations, and dam projects that would cut off food and water supplies to indigenous communities On 3 March 2016; yet unknown assailants who broke into her home murdered her.



**Dolores Huerta**

Age: 91

Roots: American

Co-founder of the United Farm Workers Association, Dolores Clara Fernandez Huerta is one of the most influential labor activists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a leader of the Chicano civil rights movement.

Huerta began her career as an activist when she co-founded the Stockton chapter of the Community Service Organization (CSO), which led voter registration drives and fought for economic improvements for Hispanics. She also founded the Agricultural Workers Association. Through a CSO associate, Huerta met activist César Chávez, with whom she shared an interest in organizing farm workers. In 1962, Huerta and Chávez founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the predecessor of the United Farm Workers' Union (UFW), which formed three years later. Huerta served as UFW vice president until 1999.

In 1973, Huerta led another consumer boycott of grapes that resulted in the groundbreaking California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, which allowed farm workers to form unions and bargain for better wages and conditions. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, Huerta worked as a lobbyist to improve workers'

legislative representation. During the 1990s and 2000s, she worked to elect more Latinos and women to political office and has championed women's issues.

The recipient of many honors, Huerta received the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award in 1998 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. As of 2015, she was a board member of the Feminist Majority Foundation, the Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus of the United Farm Workers of America, and the President of the Dolores Huerta Foundation.



### **Rita Moreno**

Age: 89

Roots: Puerto Rican

Rita Moreno has influenced the entertainment industry for over 70 years as an actor, singer, and dancer. After earning the four major entertainment awards: an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony, Moreno became the first Latina woman to have an "E.G.O.T." In 2004, she was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her many contributions to the arts. She is most famous for starring in "West Side Story" as Anita.



### **Eva Longoria**

Age: 46

Roots: Mexican - American

Eva Longoria is an award-winning actor, producer, director, entrepreneur, philanthropist and "Desperate Housewives" alumna.

Eva sits on the boards of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) and La Plaza de Cultura y Artes. In the lead up to the 2012 election, Eva and Henry Muñoz founded the Futuro Fund and the Latino Victory Project, to ensure that Latino voices nationwide were being heard. She is the founder of the Eva Longoria Found to help Latinas build better futures for themselves and their families through education and entrepreneurship. She is also co-founder of Eva's Heroes, which enriches the lives of those with special needs, and is the National Spokesperson for Padres Contra el Cancer, a non-profit committed to improving the lives of children with cancer

Her entrepreneurial activities include serving as a Global Brand Ambassador for L'Oréal Paris, CEO of UnbeliEVable Entertainment, fragrances EVA and

EVAmour, a New York Times-bestselling cookbook Eva's Kitchen, and a home collection line with JCPenney.

Eva received her master's degree in Chicano Studies from California State University, Northridge, writing her thesis on "Success STEMS from Diversity: The Value of Latinas in STEM Careers."



**Maria Hinojosa**  
Age: 60  
Roots: Mexican

Maria de Lourdes Hinojosa Ojeda is a Mexican-American journalist. She is the anchor and executive producer of Latino USA on National Public Radio, a public radio show devoted to Latino issues.

As a reporter who was the first Latina in many newsrooms, Maria dreamt of a space where she could create independent, multimedia journalism that explores and gives a critical voice to the diverse American experience. To that end, in 2010, she created the Futuro Media Group, an independent, nonprofit organization based in Harlem, NYC with the mission to create multimedia content for and about the new American mainstream in the service of empowering people to navigate the complexities of an increasingly diverse and connected world.

She is the author of two books and has won dozens of awards, including four Emmys, the John Chancellor Award, the Studs Terkel Community Media Award, two Robert F. Kennedy Awards, the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Overseas Press Club, and the Ruben Salazar Lifetime Achievement Award from the NAHJ. She has been honored with her own day in October by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and has been recognized by People En Español as one of the 25 most powerful Latina women.



**Claudia Paz y Paz**  
Age: 54  
Roots: Guatemalan

Claudia is a criminal law specialist, scholar, judge and litigator who has worked for over 18 years to strengthen the justice system in Guatemala. She was the first woman to hold office as Guatemala's Attorney General where she believed in the rule of law as a force that could strengthen society through the

pillars of peace, justice and equality. As the first Guatemalan, law enforcement office to pursue high-ranking combatants of the civil war for war crimes, human rights and corruption. Additionally, Claudia formed part of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) tasked.

Claudia has received multiple awards and recognition. In 2012, Forbes magazine included her in the list of top 5 most powerful women in the world and in 2013 she was nominated to the Nobel Peace Prize.



**Lupe Serrano**

Age: 91

Roots: Chilean

Lupe Serrano rose from second-rate dance schools in Chile and became the first Hispanic principal dancer at the prestigious American Ballet Theatre.

In a career that has spanned more than half a century, she rose to the position of prima ballerina and danced more than fifty different roles in such ballet classics as Swan Lake,

Giselle, Les Sylphides, La Fille Mal Gardée, Aurora's Wedding, and many contemporary ballets.



**Christina Figueroa**

Age: 62

Roots: Mexican and Nicaraguan

The daughter of immigrants from Nicaragua and Mexico, Hilda Solis is the former US Secretary of Labor, a former Congresswoman, and current member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for District 1. She was the first woman to receive the John F. Kennedy Profile of Courage Award in 2000 and fought in the 1990s to increase the

minimum wage in California.



Lizzie Velásquez  
Age: 32  
Roots: Mexican-American

Lizzie Velásquez was born with a rare medical condition called Marfanoid-progeroid-lipodystrophy syndrome, which prevents her from gaining fat, Lizzie grew up looking considerably different from the other children. She was bullied a lot due to her appearance, and the fact that she is vision-impaired only added to the challenges she faced. Despite having a difficult childhood and adolescence due to the constant bullying, she emerged to be an emotionally strong woman thanks to the unconditional support of her family.

Lizzie became a motivational speaker and is an outspoken anti-bullying activist. She gained much prominence following a TEDxAustinWomen Talk titled "How Do YOU Define Yourself" which she gave in 2014. The video of her talk has since earned millions of views. In 2015, she hosted a social media challenge for Bystander Revolution's Month of Action to mark the National Bullying Prevention Month. She is an icon for the anti-bullying movement and her story has been featured on various publications and websites.



Syliva Acevedo  
Age: 63  
Roots: American

Sylvia Acvaedo served as Chief Executive Officer of the Girl Scouts of the USA from May 2017- August 2020. She is community leader, author and rocket scientist.

Check out these additional resources for more ideas on how to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month:

<https://hispanicheritagemonth.gov/>

New York Latin Culture Magazine

<https://www.newyorklatinculture.com/culture/festivals/fall/hispanic-heritage-month/>

New York Metro Parents

<https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/hispanic-heritage-month-events-new-york-area>

New York City the official guide

<https://www.nycgo.com/events/hispanic-heritage-month/>

New York Family

<https://www.newyorkfamily.com/nyc-hispanic-heritage-month/>

Hispanic Society of America

<https://hispanicsociety.org/>

El Museo del Barrio:

<http://www.elmuseo.org>

100 Hispanic Woman:

<http://www.100hispanicwomen.org>

Notable Hispanic Women:

<http://www.biography.com/people/groups/notable-hispanic-women>

The Hispanic Coalition:

<http://www.hcnewyork.com/long-island-region-13.html>