

# Los Deportes

La Corrida de Toros

(Spain)



J'ai alai

(Spain)



La Charreada

(Mexico)



La Lucha Libre

(Mexico)



# La Lucha Libre



The history of Mexican wrestling dates back to 1863, during the French Intervention in Mexico.

In the early 1900s, professional wrestling was mostly a regional phenomenon in Mexico until Salvador Lutteroth founded the Empresa Mexicana de Lucha Libre (*Mexican Wrestling Enterprise*) in 1933, giving the sport national recognition for the first time.



Masks (*máscaras*) have been used dating back to the beginnings of lucha libre in the early part of the 20th century, and have a historical significance to Mexico in general, dating to the days of the Aztecs. Early masks were very simple with basic colors to distinguish the wrestler. In modern lucha libre, masks are colorfully designed to evoke the images of animals, gods, ancient heroes, whose identity the *luchador* takes on during a performance. Virtually all wrestlers in Mexico will start their careers wearing masks, but over the span of their careers, a large number of them will be unmasked. Sometimes, a wrestler slated for retirement will be unmasked in his final bout or at the beginning of a final tour, signifying loss of identity as that character. The mask is considered sacred to a degree, so much so that fully removing an opponent's mask during a match is grounds for disqualification.

During their careers, masked *luchadores* will often be seen in public wearing their masks and keeping up the culture of Lucha Libre, while other masked wrestlers will interact with the public and press normally. However, they will still go to great lengths to conceal their true identities; in effect, the mask is synonymous with the *luchador*.

Although masks are a feature of lucha libre, it is a misconception that every Mexican wrestler uses one. There have been several maskless wrestlers who have been successful. Formerly masked wrestlers who lost their masks have had continued success despite losing their masks.

lucha libre



## La Charreada

The **Charreada** is a competitive event similar to **rodeo** and was developed from practices used on the haciendas of old Mexico. The sport has been described as "living history," or as an art form drawn from the demands of working life.

Evolving from the traditions brought from Spain in the 16th century, the first charreadas were competitions between neighboring haciendas. The modern Charreada developed after the Mexican Revolution. The **competing charros** today are often made up from extended families **who have been performing for up to five generations.**

The *charreada* consists of nine events for men plus one for women, all of which involve horses, cattle or both. Some of the events in the charreada have been criticized by animal advocacy groups and some states (of Mexico) have banned certain events. However, there is an absence of independent statistical data and unbiased recording of the injury rate of animals has not been undertaken.

The participants in the *charreada* wear **traditional charro clothing, including a closely fitted suit, chaps, boots, and a wide brim sombrero.** The body-fitting suit of the charro, while decorative, is also practical; it fits closely to insure there is no flapping cloth to be caught by the horns of steer. The *botinas*, or little boots, prevent feet from slipping through the stirrups. Spurs are worn on the botinas.

## La Charreada en México