Native American languages have added numerous words to all New World languages, especially in matters related to food, clothing, and other items of everyday life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elote</td>
<td>corn (Ecuador)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chicha</td>
<td>a liquor (Venezuela, Colombia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Ecuador)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulque</td>
<td>a liquor (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maiz</td>
<td>maize, or corn (all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quetzal</td>
<td>money of Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chocolate</td>
<td>chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aguacate</td>
<td>avocado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jitomate</td>
<td>tomato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cacique</td>
<td>chief (all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canel</td>
<td>Indian (Guatemala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machete</td>
<td>cane cutter (all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cacahuatesis</td>
<td>peanut butter (all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caba</td>
<td>siso hemp (all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>champu</td>
<td>cereal grain (Ecuador)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arrival of Europeans in Latin America**

The conquest, exploration, and early colonization of Latin America were mainly the work of the Spanish and Portuguese. To understand why these Europeans acted as they did in Latin America, it is important to learn something about Spain and Portugal.

**Spain and Portugal**

Spain and Portugal are part of the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe. (Iberia was the name the Romans gave the peninsula.) The Pyrenees Mountains separate Iberia from the rest of Europe. North Africa is just 12 miles across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain and Portugal. Geography has therefore played a part in making Spain and Portugal culturally different from the rest of Europe. The mountains and the strait have acted as barriers.

Along with the original peoples, Carthaginians, Arab and Berber (Moroccan) Muslims, and Jews have made important contributions to a unique culture in Iberia.

Two events in the history of the peninsula strongly influenced the Iberian people of the 15th century. The first was the coming of Christianity to the peninsula about 1,800 years ago. The second was the Arab invasion from North Africa about A.D. 700, which brought the Muslim religion (Islam) and Muslim culture to Iberia. The history of Iberia from this event to about A.D. 1500 revolves around the efforts by the Spanish and Portuguese to drive the Arabs out of the peninsula.

The Muslim Arabs ruled Spain and Portugal as one country for a long time. By A.D. 1250, however, the Portuguese had driven out the Muslims, more than 200 years before the Spanish did. The Portuguese built their nation in the western part of Iberia facing the Atlantic Ocean. The Portuguese did not have to fight as long or as hard as the Spanish to free their land. (Can you give reasons for this?) As a result, the Portuguese developed their own culture and language. In addition, their religious feeling and warlike spirit were not as great as those of the Spanish.

The Spanish did not completely drive out the Arabs until 1492. Because of their long struggle, the Spanish developed a deep respect for religion and became adventuresome and warlike. Their nation faced the Mediterranean Sea.
Spain Gains Control of the Caribbean

In 1453, the Turks captured the city of Constantinople, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The Turks now controlled the main trade routes to India and the East Indies.

Almost immediately the Portuguese began to look for a new route to India by sailing around Africa. In 1498, Vasco da Gama went around Africa to India. Pedro Cabral, on his way to India in 1500, was driven off course in a storm and found himself on the coast of Brazil.

In August 1492, Columbus set sail from Spain. By sailing west across the wide ocean, he hoped to reach India. In October 1492, his ships came to what is today called Watling Island. From there he sailed to Cuba, which Columbus called “Jiana.” Then he sailed to Haiti, which he named “Española” (Hispaniola), or “Little Spain.” Even though he did not know it, Columbus had discovered a “new world,” that is, a world new to Europeans.

The Spanish sent many expeditions into the Caribbean area after Columbus’ discovery. They conquered the Native Americans first on Hispaniola and then on Cuba. Puerto Rico was conquered by Ponce de León in 1509. In the same year a settlement was made on Jamaica.

Spanish Conquest of the Mainland

While Columbus was making his four voyages of discovery, others were planning or making similar expeditions. Cabral reached the coast of Brazil in 1500. In 1503, Amerigo Vespucci also reached Brazil. Finding a wood similar to the brazilwood of Asia, he gave the name “Brazil” to the area. When he returned to Spain he wrote about his experiences. A mapmaker, Martin Waldseemüller, read Amerigo’s story and published a map of the New World, using the name “America.”

Having conquered the Caribbean area, the Spaniards turned their interest toward the mainland. It is important to note that the conquest of the mainland by the Spanish was carried out by private persons at their own expense. Three motives for conquest developed: “gold, glory, and gospel” (spreading Christianity).

Among the leaders of the conquest in America were four men who made possible the setting up of a permanent colonial empire for Spain.

The man picked to lead the expedition to conquer the Aztecs of Mexico was Hernán Cortés. He arrived in Mexico in 1519 with about 500 soldiers, 16 horses, and 10 cannons. When he landed, Cortés burned the ships that the expedition had come in to remove any idea of retreat. Victory or death was the only choice. Later, reinforcements arrived. Cortés set up the first Spanish settlement in North America at Veracruz.

Although greatly outnumbered, the Spanish conquered the great Aztec Empire. There were many reasons for their success. Cortés was a very fine leader, and his soldiers were disciplined and skilled. In addition, the cannon and muskets of the Spanish were far better weapons than the war clubs of the Aztecs. Horses were even more important. The Aztecs had never seen a horse with a rider on its back; they believed that rider and horse were one strange, powerful animal.

Another Spanish advantage was a religious legend of the Aztecs. This legend said that a white god, Quetzalcoatl, had left Mexico some time in the past and was supposed to return on the wings of a giant eagle. When the Aztecs first heard of the Spanish fleet with its white
sails coming over the horizon, they believed that the ships were large birds and that the white-skinned Cortés was Quetzalcoatl. This belief at first kept the Aztecs from attacking the Spaniards. Cortés also made agreements with other Native Americans in the area, such as the Tlaxcala, who supplied troops and information. These tribes were willing to assist Cortés because they hated and feared Aztec power and domination.

Also important was a smallpox epidemic that broke out among the Aztecs. The Aztecs had never been exposed to this disease and as a result had no immunity (protection) from it. Consequently, many died. Within two and a half years, the Aztecs were conquered and Mexico became Spanish territory.

Soon after “New Spain” (Mexico) was won for Spain, the Inca area of Peru was added to Spain’s New World Empire. Using Cortés’ conquest as a guide, Francisco Pizarro led a small force (183 men and 37 horses) against the Inca Empire. In November of 1532, Pizarro met the Inca ruler, Atahuallpa, who was at war with his half-brother, Huascar, over control of the empire. With the Incas busy fighting among themselves, the Spanish were able to win control. In November 1533, Hernando de Soto took Cuzco, the Incan capital. In January 1535, Pizarro founded Lima, the “city of the kings,” as his capital. As in New Spain, the surrounding territory was quickly explored and brought under Spanish rule.
self-sufficient. Often the owner lived on his hacienda only part of the time. He spent most of his life in the nearby town or in the capital city, where life was much more comfortable. Life in the villages and on the hacienda was dreary, and hard work was all the people had to look forward to.

One of the leading colonial amusements was gambling. It became so widespread that both the Spanish and Portuguese governments tried to control it. Both mother countries stopped sending playing cards to the colonies. (Why do you think they did this?) In response, the colonists used free time to make their own cards.

Other amusements were bullfights, cockfights, jousting, horsemanship, dancing, and singing. All adults drank alcoholic beverages, and almost all smoked tobacco. Even children drank and smoked from early childhood.

Church holidays and public holidays were held often. A fiesta to celebrate a holiday sometimes lasted for days. At the fiesta there were fireworks, parades, and contests of physical skill.

Education, which was carried on by the church, was mainly for the rich. Only a very small minority of Native Americans went to school. Girls were given no formal education except in convents, and there were no schools that both sexes could attend. Marriages were arranged by the families of the young people.

Because of the warm climate, and because there was nothing else to do during the heat of the day, resting or sleeping or simply killing time was a regular part of life. In all of the Latin American colonies the midday siesta (nap or rest) became the law. All places of business were closed, and the streets were deserted.

**Revolution and Independence**

**Conditions in 1800**

The Spanish Empire in Latin America lasted approximately 300 years. However, throughout these years forces were working to bring about its end. Under the mercantile system much of the wealth of the colonies was exported to Spain. Taxes were many and high, and government officials appointed by the king were dishonest and cruel. The Native Americans and blacks were held in slavery. Many poor white farmers were barely able to make a living.

**Factors Leading to the Desire for Independence**

There was one group that had both wealth and education. Colonial landlords and traders had gained great wealth, and with this wealth they were able to educate their children, often in European schools. Many of the children were born in America. They were called criollos. Spaniards born in Spain but living in the colonies were called peninsulares. Only the peninsulares could hold high offices in the colonial government. The best the criollos could hope for was to win seats in the town councils. As the criollos became better educated, they also became more unhappy. They read about such ideas as all men having the right to life, liberty, and property. If the government tried to take away these rights, the people could then rise up and overthrow the existing system. This was known as the social
The American Revolution was an important event for the criollos. They saw the North Americans rebel against a European king and win their independence. Such revolutionary North Americans as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine were heroes to them, and many read translations of their writings. What the English colonists had been able to do, the Spanish and Portuguese colonists believed they could do also.

The French Revolution, which broke out in 1789, also influenced the Latin Americans. The French overthrew their king. In the series of wars that followed, France fought against almost all of Europe. The French, led by Napoleon, came out of the early years of the wars victorious. Napoleon overthrew the Spanish king and put his own brother on the Spanish throne. The Latin American colonies refused to obey this foreign king. Also, the ideas of the French Revolution—“Liberty, Fraternity (brotherhood), and Equality”—made Latin Americans think of independence.

Another important source of unhappiness was Spanish mercantile trade and economic policy. The criollos felt, with justification, that this policy and the laws that enforced the policy limited the economic development and prosperity of Latin America.

Finally, many of the colonists began to feel like Americans rather than Europeans. They began to develop patriotism and pride in the local areas in which they lived. These feelings led to even greater dislike for being ruled by “foreigners.”

The Rise and Fall of the Portuguese Empire in Brazil

After the discovery of America, Spain and Portugal agreed to draw a line on the map to divide their colonies (Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494). Portugal was to have all the lands east of the line, and Spain the rest. The only part of Latin America that was east of the line was the “bulge” of land that is now the main part of Brazil.

Portugal claimed Brazil in April 1500 when Pedro Cabral landed on the coast. He called the land “Isla Vera Cruz” (“Island of the True Cross”). Later, the Portuguese called certain trees that they found “brazilwoods” because the wood was red, the color of a glowing ember (brasa in Portuguese). They changed the name of the country to Brazil, after the trees.

From 1501 to 1533, Portuguese trading expeditions came to Brazil almost yearly. However, an actual colony was not begun until 1533. The most successful early settlements were developed on the coast at Recife and Salvador in the northwest and São Vicente in the south. Large sugarcane plantations were set up in the northwest. Cattle hides, cotton, and tobacco, in addition to the sugar, were exported to Europe and brought great wealth to the planters.

The Portuguese colonists forced the local Native Americans to work on the plantations as slaves. Large numbers of Native Americans died of overwork and from European diseases. Many refused to become slaves and died fighting the Portuguese. To replace the Native Americans, Portugal began to bring thousands of black African slaves to Brazil.
When the Dutch started to settle in Brazil, fighting with the Portuguese broke out and the last Dutch settlement was destroyed by 1654. In the 1690s and early 1700s, adventurers from São Paulo discovered diamonds and gold in central Brazil. These discoveries brought thousands of Portuguese into Brazil’s interior.

Much of this land was in territory that the Treaty of Tordesillas had given to Spain. In 1750, Spain and Portugal signed a new treaty in which Spain recognized Portugal’s claim to almost all of what is now Brazil.

At the same time, Rio de Janeiro became a major seaport. Miners sent gold and diamonds to Rio, and ships took them to Portugal. In 1763, Rio became the capital of Brazil. By 1800, 3.5 million people, half of them slaves, were living in Brazil.

Portugal profited from the system of mercantilism it forced on the colony of Brazil. It limited the economic growth of the colony by not allowing the development of manufacturing. Portugal wished to sell its manufactured goods to the colonists in return for the gold, diamonds, and plantation crops imported from Brazil.

In 1807, when Napoleon of France invaded Portugal, Prince John, the ruler of Portugal, fled to Rio de Janeiro with his family. In 1808, Rio became the capital of the Portuguese Empire, and in 1815, the prince created the Kingdom of Brazil. When John returned to Portugal in 1821, he left his son Pedro to rule Brazil.

In September 1822, Pedro declared Brazil an independent kingdom and granted the people a constitution. A few months later he was crowned Emperor Dom Pedro I. Thus ended the Portuguese Empire in Brazil.

José Bonifácio Andrade was the architect of Brazilian independence and has been called the “Father of Modern Brazil.” In 1822, he helped guide Brazil out of the Portuguese Empire. He persuaded Dom Pedro to remain in Brazil. He advised that Brazil become a limited constitutional monarchy with Dom Pedro as Emperor.

Andrade felt a constitutional (limited) monarchy was the best bridge from being a colony with little or no freedom to becoming a republic with complete freedom. Part of Andrade’s program was put into effect in 1822 when Brazil became a free limited monarchy. Many of his ideas were included in the Brazilian Constitution of 1824.

The Independence Movement

The battle for independence in Latin America lasted about 35 years. It began in the early 1790s when the black slaves of Haiti threw out their French masters and set up a small island republic in the Caribbean. This small nation won its independence in 1803–1804, after more than ten years of fighting. For most of the region, the independence movement ended in 1824, when Simon Bolivar’s army of South Americans defeated a Spanish royal army at Ayacucho, high in the Andes Mountains of Peru.

There were three kinds of independence movements in Latin America:

1. A true revolutionary uprising in which the ruling class was violently and totally overthrown and driven out by the people.

2. Civil war, with criollos fighting on both sides along with other South Americans. (This was much like the American Revolution.)

3. Easy achievement of independence, with little or no fighting. Few changes took place in these cases except that Spanish and Portuguese royal officials disappeared, and were replaced by local citizens (usually the criollo landowners and traders).