

A Mexican Goat

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Mexican weddings have their own unique blend of religious, national, and local traditions. Our village, Chinantha, is located to the south of Puebla, in the southern part of Mexico, my native country. As in other parts of Mexico, the couple and their guests go to church, where the ceremony is performed. Then there is a reception where music is performed. What makes Chinantha unique is that in every wedding in our village, there has to be a goat.

Years ago, in Mexico, when I was about twelve years old, I went to my aunt's wedding. The thing I remember most about the wedding was the gift that her future husband brought her: a goat. This goat was big and mean.

This particular wedding started as a traditional wedding. Everybody went to church and then came back to my aunt's house for the reception. The guests started to dance and drink beer, but all we could hear was music. After a while, the man with the microphone asked everybody to dance "La Vivora de la Mar" (the Sea Snake), a popular dance in Mexico. The newlyweds stood on top of two chairs, while the guests ran between and beneath them. Then everybody went to eat the festive meal, but not before the newlyweds cut the wedding cake, which was a big cake, by the way.

Later that night, I went outside and saw that the goat wasn't tied up. I went up to him and said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Goat, but I don't know you very well." But then he ran after me! I was frightened and was lucky to escape, and then I knew that he was a goat with an attitude.

After the celebration and my encounter with the goat, the guests extended their best wishes to the newly-married couple.

So what happened to the goat? Each couple usually decides what to do with the goat. The goat is there to symbolize strength and fertility for the newlyweds.

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