

MYTHS & LEGENDS OF LATIN AMERICA

Read the stories

They tell tall tales in Latin America, just like we do.

While the characters in Latin American folklore might seem strange, they attempt to explain the unknown in the same way that every legend does. Keep that in mind as you read these myths and legends from south of the border, and consider their cultural significance. Are they social cautionary tales, or just scary stories? How do their morals compare to some of the stories you've heard?



EL CHUPACABRA

The blood sucking dog, origin of legend: Mexico

Is it an alien species, or a mutant dog? First reported in 1995, farmers have blamed the disappearance and mutilation of their cattle on this hostile mythical creature. The legend has since taken root in Central and South America, extending as far as the Caribbean islands.



EL SILBÓN

The whistling ghost, origin of legend: Venezuela

The legend goes that El Silbón is the ghost of a young boy who murdered his father and brings the omen of death with him. If you hear the faint whistle of "do-re-mi" while walking at night, that means he's getting closer...



EL DUENDE

The helpful gnome, origin of legend: Belize

Stories of these childlike goblins are common throughout Latin America. It's believed they help lost travelers find their way out of the woods, though we don't recommend stopping to ask for directions if you see one.



EL COCO

The bedtime bogeyman, origin of legend: Spain

While this particular bogeyman (there are hundreds of them throughout the world) has roots in Spain, it has become a unique legend in Latin America. In Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala, he's depicted as a large-headed monster waiting under the beds of disobedient children.



EL BASILICO CHILOTE

The serpentine rooster, origin of legend: Chile

This bizarre looking monster hatches from a chicken egg incubated by a rooster, and lives in a hole underneath its victims' house. It comes out only to feed on the saliva of those living above, slowly dehydrating the residents until they die.

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Choose your words

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this vocabulary chart to create your own mythical creature. Choose one word from each column to describe how the creature looks and behaves, or write in your own en español!

PHYSICAL TRAIT	MOOD	MYTHICAL POWER	CHARACTERISTIC	MISCELLANEOUS
<i>el cuerno</i> (horn)	<i>inquieto</i> (restless)	<i>transformación</i> (transformation)	<i>extraño</i> (strange)	<i>un bastón</i> (walking stick)
<i>la boca</i> (mouth)	<i>feliz</i> (happy)	<i>vuelo</i> (flying)	<i>hermoso</i> (beautiful)	<i>un vestido</i> (dress/gown)
<i>las escalas</i> (scales)	<i>peligroso</i> (dangerous)	<i>curación</i> (healing)	<i>feo</i> (ugly)	<i>el pelaje</i> (fur)
<i>los ojos</i> (eyes)	<i>amable</i> (friendly)	<i>fuerza</i> (strength)	<i>pequeño</i> (small)	<i>una joya</i> (jewel)
<i>la cola</i> (tail)	<i>tranquilo</i> (calm/quiet)	<i>predicción</i> (prediction)	<i>viejo</i> (old)	<i>la cadena</i> (chain)
<i>el cuello</i> (neck)	<i>impredecible</i> (unpredictable)	<i>invisibilidad</i> (invisibility)	<i>grande</i> (large)	<i>la ala</i> (wing)

EXAMPLE: El Chupacabra

Selected vocabulary words

la cola : tail

inquieto : restless

fuerza: strength

pequeño: small

el pelaje: fur



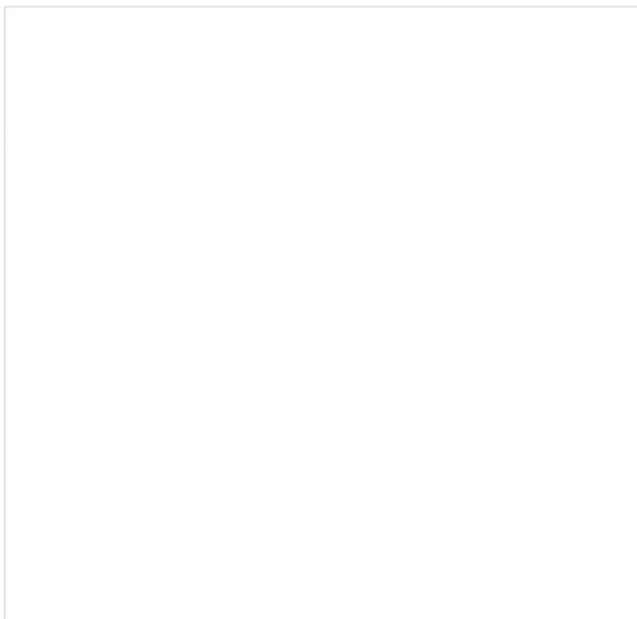
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Create your own

INSTRUCTIONS: Now it's time to draw your creature in the box below. Write down the Spanish words you chose from the vocabulary chart on the lines below, and find a way to include each of them in your drawing.

CREATURE NAME:

Selected vocabulary words



INSTRUCTIONS: Next, write its legend or story below. What is its name, and how did it get it? Where is it from, and who has seen it? What does it do?

