¡Pleibol!

For nearly a century, baseball has been a social and cultural force in Latino communities across the United States. And Latino players have had a huge impact on the game.

To celebrate this story, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and the National Museum of American History proudly present ¡Pleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues / En los barrios y las grandes ligas. This bilingual exhibition takes audiences on a journey into the heart of American baseball, to understand how generations of Latinos/as have helped make the game what it is today. From community baseball teams to the Major League, discover how the game can bring people together regardless of race, class, and gender. These inspirational stories reflect larger themes in American history that connect us all, on and off the diamond.

The exhibition is the result of collaborations with communities in 14 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, working together to bring visibility to Latino/a histories through baseball. From 2015 to 2018, Smithsonian curators traveled across the country co-hosting events, collecting artifacts and oral histories, and discovering and documenting the baseball stories that became the foundation for ¡Pleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues.

Exhibition at a Glance

- 20-25 free-standing retractable banners (each 4’ x 7’) with bilingual text, photographs, graphic art
- 1,000-1,500 square feet
- Digital design templates for supplemental/ local content
- Exhibition video (venue provides equipment)
- Limited security
- Participation fee: $3,000 for 12 weeks, plus outgoing shipping
- Tour begins October 2020
- Selection of 3-D digital files of historic objects, for use in augmented reality, 3-D imaging and/or 3-D printing applications

Additional Support

- Complete curatorial and registration information
- Complete shipping, handling, and installation instructions
- Wall-to-wall fine arts insurance under the Smithsonian’s policy
- Public relations support, including templates for promotional materials, ads, etc.
- Links and promotion through SITES social media
- List of speakers and Smithsonian-developed educational materials

Hit a grand slam with your audiences! Find out more about this traveling exhibition.

For booking, contact Ed Liskey, 202-633-3142, liskeye@si.edu
For content questions, contact Maria del Carmen Cossu, 202-633-3101, cossumd@si.edu

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Field of Dreams

Baseball transformed the lives of many in Latino communities. Throughout the 20th century in the United States and Latin America, baseball provided a way for people to strive for a better future. Agricultural and industrial workers incorporated the sport into their workplace, and sometimes supplemented their incomes with baseball. When resources were slim, many made do with the meager equipment they had on hand—anything to play the game. And baseball was more than just a game. Communities also met on baseball fields and in the stands to connect, be part of a shared culture, and organize around social justice causes.

“His first bat was fashioned from the branch of a guava tree, a glove was improvised from a coffee bean sack, and the ball was a tight knot of rags.”
—Kal Wagenheim, biographer, *Clemente*

Game Changers

Latino/a contributions changed baseball in countless ways. Roberto Clemente. Fernando Valenzuela. Minnie Miñoso. These and so many other legendary Latino/a baseball heroes—along with fans, owners, and managers—changed the sights, sounds, and style of the game. And, in Latino communities, baseball played a larger role than any other sport in the 20th century.

Whether in the barrios or in the big leagues, baseball went hand in hand with cultural identity. Baseball diamonds served as a crucial place for people to come together and express cultural traditions. Women, whether cheering on the sidelines or creating their own leagues, played a major role. Today, the players, owners, and fans continue to change the game, and baseball continues to be a big part of Latino/a culture.

Pastime of the Americas

Baseball in America is a multidimensional migration story. Many immigrants from the Caribbean and Central and South America already knew the sport from their home countries, and generations of Latino/a ballplayers were born and trained in the United States. In local and professional leagues, Latinos/as play baseball in every state and territory of the U.S. The sport provides one incredibly rich point of entry to tell complex stories about what it means to be American, and how that changes over time. Through the lens of baseball, *¡Pleibol!* explores some of the many issues that confront immigrant communities, in the past, today—and in the future.

“Latinos have changed baseball. Period.”
—Linda Alvarado, co-owner of the Colorado Rockies

Fans spell out the Spanglish nickname “Los Doyers” at Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, California, 2009

Kevork Djansezian/Getty Images

Sport/Getty Images

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