

Latino Heritage in King County / Patrimonio Latino en la Area Metropolitana de Seattle



Today, the Greater Seattle area has a vibrant Latino community spread across numerous neighborhoods and outlying cities. In some places, Latinos represent nearly 30 percent of the population. For example, Seattle's South Park neighborhood and nearby White Center community are long established centers for King County's Latino culture, serving as home to many Latino families and businesses for decades. The cities of Sea Tac and Burien, in contrast, are emerging as relatively new and sizable, culturally recognizable Latino neighborhoods.

Prior to the 1940s, there were few Latino residents in the Greater Seattle area, or King County in general. But, during World War II, many Latinos migrated there for work in the wartime industries, especially shipbuilding and aircraft assembly jobs. These early economic migrants were primarily of Mexican descent, referring to themselves as Mexicanos, Tejanos (those from Texas), and so on. In 1946, the Boeing aviation company laid off more than half its workers in the post-war slow down, and most of those newly unemployed workers left King County in search of jobs elsewhere. Many returned to agricultural work in the Yakima Valley.

Starting in the late 1960s, a second wave of Latino residents came as students to attend the University of Washington. Almost all of them were recruited from farming communities in the Yakima Valley and were the first in their families to pursue professional careers. Those pioneers had a lasting impact not only on the University but the Seattle area in general. They brought a strong work ethic, pride in their culture, and more awareness for social issues affecting minorities, such as the national farmworker and labor rights movement at the time.

The 1970s, though, is the decade when the Greater Seattle's Latino community began to flourish and take permanent root. The 1970s witnessed the establishment of significant social justice and community service organizations such as Sea Mar Community Health and El Centro de la Raza, both of which have become strong voices for the Latino community in the region. The 1970s also brought new immigrants from other countries, seeking asylum from political upheaval. For example, the 1973 military coup in Chile sent many political refugees to the Seattle area. New arrivals from Central and South America continued to settle in the Seattle area in the 1980s and 1990s.

This special focus on Latino culture in the Greater Seattle area has identified sample destinations, or waypoints, to help illustrate the development of the Latino community in King County. Some of the themes (and sample sites) highlighted include:

Hoy en día, el área metropolitana de Seattle tiene una vibrante comunidad latina extendida a lo largo de numerosos vecindarios y ciudades anexas. En algunos lugares, los latinos representan cerca del 30 por ciento de la población. Por ejemplo, el vecindario de South Park en Seattle y la aldea de la comunidad de White Center, son centros arraigados de la cultura latina en King County, sirviendo de hogar a muchas familias y negocios latinos por décadas. Las ciudades de Sea Tac y Burien, en contraste, están emergiendo como nuevos e identificables vecindarios de cultura latina.

Previo a la década de 1940, había pocos residentes latinos en el área metropolitana de Seattle y el King County en general. Pero, durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, muchos latinos emigraron aquí para trabajar en la industria de guerra, especialmente en trabajos navales y de ensamblaje de aviones. Estos primeros migrantes económicos eran principalmente nacidos en México, Mexicanos, o nacidos en Texas de padres mexicanos, llamándose a sí mismo Tejanos. En 1946, la compañía de aviación Boeing despidió a más de la mitad de sus trabajadores en la desaceleración de posguerra, y la gran mayoría de estos recién desempleados dejaron el King County en búsqueda de trabajo en otros lugares. Muchos regresaron al trabajo del campo en el valle de Yakima.

A partir de finales de la década de los sesentas, una segunda oleada de residentes latinos llegó como estudiantes para asistir a la Universidad de Washington. Casi todos ellos fueron reclutados de comunidades agrícolas en el valle de Yakima y eran los primeros en su familia en buscar alcanzar una carrera profesional. Estos pioneros tuvieron un impacto duradero no solo en la Universidad, pero en el área de Seattle en general. Trajeron consigo una fuerte ética laboral, orgullo en su cultura, y más conciencia sobre problemáticas sociales afectando a las minorías en ese momento, tales como la unión de campesinos y el movimiento de derechos laborales.

La década de los setentas es sin embargo, cuando la comunidad latina del área metropolitana de Seattle comienza a florecer y a echar raíces. Los 1970s fueron testigos del establecimiento de significativas organizaciones de justicia social y servicios comunitarios como la Clínica de la Comunidad Sea Mar y El Centro de la Raza; ambas se han convertido en fuertes portavoces de la comunidad latina de la región. Los setentas también trajeron nuevos migrantes de otros países latinos, que buscaban asilo de tumultos políticos. Recién llegados de Centro y Sudamérica continuaron estableciéndose en el área de Seattle en los ochentas y noventas.

Este enfoque especial en la cultura latina del área metropolitana de Seattle ha identificado un muestreo de destinos, o waypoints, para ayudar a ilustrar el desarrollo de la comunidad latina en el King County. Algunos de los temas y sitios ejemplos resaltados incluyen:

Commerce/Comercio

From dress shops to bakeries and restaurants, these businesses have kept Latino culture thriving. (See the Salvadorean Bakery, Panadería La Ideal, Jalisco Mexican Restaurant (South Park), Decoraciones Ely, and more.)

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Education/Educación

The Students of '68 (see video for the University of Washington) paved the way for more Latino students to pursue higher education. Proyecto Saber, a dropout prevention program started for the Seattle public schools in 1975,

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Art/Arte

Several significant murals related to Latino heritage are scattered around Seattle, as well as many more examples of street art around various neighborhoods such as South Park. (See Kane Hall/UW, Ethnic Cultural

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Social Justice & Civil Rights/Justicia Social & Derechos Civiles.

Seattle has a strong history of Latino leaders who have formed prominent organizations such as Sea Mar, El Centro de la Raza, and Casa Latina. All of these serve as models for social justice, civil/labor/immigrant rights and

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Religion/Religión

Churches can be anchor points for communities, and several churches in the Seattle area serve as cultural havens for Latinos. The churches here selected all offer masses in Spanish and some flavor of Central or South

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Images



2018 image of bakers at work at La Ideal in South Park



Cultural Waypoints

Barron's Barbershop/Hispanic American Social Club/Peluquería Barron/Club Social Hispano Americano
[Visit Barron's Barbershop/Hispanic American Social Club/Peluquería Barron/Club Social Hispano Americano](#)

Cesar Chavez Park/Parque César Chávez
[Visit Cesar Chavez Park/Parque César Chávez](#)

Christ the King/Iglesia de Cristo Rey
[Visit Christ the King/Iglesia de Cristo Rey](#)

Decoraciones Ely
[Visit Decoraciones Ely](#)

El Templo Cristiano
[Visit El Templo Cristiano](#)

Franklin High School
[Visit Franklin High School](#)

Holy Family School/Escuela de la Sagrada Familia
[Visit Holy Family School/Escuela de la Sagrada Familia](#)

Sea Mar Community Health/Sea Mar Clínica de la Comunidad
[Visit Sea Mar Community Health/Sea Mar Clínica de la Comunidad](#)

South Park neighborhood/Vecindario de South Park
[Visit South Park neighborhood/Vecindario de South Park](#)

St. Edward's Church and School/Iglesia y Escuela de San Eduardo
[Visit St. Edward's Church and School/Iglesia y Escuela de San Eduardo](#)

University of Washington
[Visit University of Washington](#)

Casa Latina
[Visit Casa Latina](#)

Chief Sealth High School
[Visit Chief Sealth High School](#)

City of Burien/Ciudad de Burien
[Visit City of Burien/Ciudad de Burien](#)

El Centro de la Raza
[Visit El Centro de la Raza](#)

Ethnic Cultural Center
[Visit Ethnic Cultural Center](#)

Holy Family Church/Iglesia de la Sagrada Familia
[Visit Holy Family Church/Iglesia de la Sagrada Familia](#)

Salvadorean Bakery/Panadería Salvadoreña
[Visit Salvadorean Bakery/Panadería Salvadoreña](#)

Sea Mar Community Health/Sea Mar Clínica de la Comunidad
[Visit Sea Mar Community Health/Sea Mar Clínica de la Comunidad](#)

Southeast Seattle
[Visit Southeast Seattle](#)

St. Mary's Church/Iglesia de Santa María
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White Center neighborhood/Vecindario de White Center
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