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A woman prepares a Tlacoyo to sell on the Zocalo square in Mexico City.



A dancer performs a purification ritual on a man at the Zocalo square in Mexico City.



A man wears a Penacho before performing an Aztec dance.



An edible scorpion is seen at a store of the San Juan market at the historic center.



Edible worms are seen at a store of the San Juan market.

**'My being shines'**  
 The rhythm of the huehuetl drum and the deep sound of the atecocolli, a seashell used as a kind of trumpet, seem to appeal to young people in particular. "If I dance some of my culture, my being shines-I shine-I feel at one with the universe," said Maria Cervantes, 22, who has been a student of Ramirez since she was 15. Another ancient custom that has endured since Tenochtitlan times is the city's renowned street food. The smell of corn wafts through the streets of the historic center. Minerva Martinez, 40, sells tlayudas, a type of corn tortilla that dates back to pre-Hispanic times. "The Mexica (Aztecs) also cultivated it and we farmers also plant the corn," said Martinez, an indigenous Otomi who believes that the Tenochtitlan legacy "still exists."

Scholars trace the roots of street food back to the laborious preparation of ingredients and dishes such as tortillas or tamales—a type of corn dumpling-whose consumption also had a ritual nature. "This complexity means street food has always been a traditional reference point—totally Mexican and pre-Hispanic," said chef and historian Rodrigo Llanes. — AFP



Corns are displayed for sale at the La Merced market.



A young woman serves maguey worms at a store.



A dancer performs a purification ritual on a woman at the Zocalo square.



People perform an Aztec dance at the historical Center in Mexico City.