

# AZTEC SPIRIT LIVES ON IN MEXICO AFTER 500 YEARS



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

Traditional healers and dancers resplendent in feather headdresses and body paint perform ancient rites in the heart of Mexico City, keeping the Aztec spirit alive five centuries after the Spanish conquest. Today, the Mexican authorities will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the “fall” of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan to the conquistadors and their indigenous allies. But Sergio Segura Octocayohua and others like him who strive to preserve Aztec culture plan their own celebrations the day before in honor of the “heroic defense” of the city.

“Despite being distorted, our identity, philosophy and history live on,” Octocayohua said during a break from overseeing healing rituals in the heart of the capital’s historic district. “We no longer fight with weapons. Now we fight with words, identity and dance,” the 58-year-old said. All around, people of all ages performed choreographies that alternate twists, stomps and energetic movements of their limbs, accentuated by their colorful plumes and the rattling of seeds tied on legs.



A woman prepares to perform an Aztec dance at the Zocalo square in Mexico City.



A young woman holds a dish of maguey worms at a store of the San Juan market.



People perform an Aztec dance.



Edible scorpions are seen at a store of the San Juan market at the historic center in Mexico City.



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