

CELEBRATE THE ORIGINAL COWBOYS DURING NATIONAL DAY OF THE COWBOY / DÍA NACIONAL DEL VAQUERO AT THE BRISCOE

**Live Charro Demonstrations, Tejano Reenactors, Music, Hands-on Crafts and Family Fun Showcase the
Enduring Legacy of the Vaquero on Saturday, July 25, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

San Antonio, TX – (July 2026) Long before the American cowboy became a symbol of the West, vaqueros perfected the horsemanship, ranching techniques and traditions that continue to define cowboy culture today. On Saturday, July 25, the Briscoe Western Art Museum invites visitors to experience that living legacy during its annual [National Day of the Cowboy /Día Nacional del Vaquero](#) celebration, a free day of live demonstrations, music, history and hands-on family activities celebrating cowboys and vaqueros, the original cowboys of the American West. The event is open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and is free to attend, though [pre-registration](#) is recommended.

Presented alongside the museum's landmark exhibitions [Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story](#) and [Selena Forever / Siempre Selena](#), this year's celebration shines a spotlight on the people, traditions and cultures that shaped Texas and the American West while offering an unforgettable day of family fun along the San Antonio River Walk.

"Before there were cowboys, there were vaqueros," said Liz Jackson, President and CEO of the Briscoe Western Art Museum. "National Day of the Cowboy – or Día Nacional del Vaquero – is about celebrating the people whose traditions shaped the American West. By honoring the vaquero this year, we're telling a more complete story of our shared history and recognizing the extraordinary influence Tejanos and Spanish heritage have had on ranching, horsemanship and cowboy culture. It's a story that belongs to all of us, and one we're proud to share with our community."

Why Día Nacional del Vaquero?

While National Day of the Cowboy honors the enduring spirit of the American cowboy, the Briscoe is embracing the Spanish translation – Día Nacional del Vaquero – to recognize the horsemen of Spain and Mexico whose horsemanship, ranching techniques and traditions became the foundation of cowboy culture throughout Texas and the American West.

This year's Día Nacional del Vaquero celebrates the horsemen whose ranching traditions, horsemanship and innovations gave rise to the American cowboy. Long before the American cowboy became a symbol of the West, vaqueros developed many of the ranching practices, horsemanship skills and cattle-handling techniques still used today. From branding and roping to saddles, spurs and cattle drives, the vaquero tradition laid the foundation for ranching culture across Texas and the American Southwest.

Even many familiar cowboy terms have Spanish roots that reflect this enduring influence. Words such as lasso (from the Spanish lazo), rodeo, bronco, mustang and buckaroo – derived from vaquero – illustrate how deeply Spanish and Mexican traditions shaped the language and identity of the American cowboy.

Experience the Original Cowboys

One of the day's signature attractions will be live charro demonstrations presented by the San Antonio Charro Association.

Charros are Mexico's traditional horsemen, celebrated for their extraordinary horsemanship, precision roping and ranching skills. Their techniques, traditions and equipment influenced generations of Texas vaqueros before becoming the foundation of the American cowboy.

Beginning at 10 a.m., visitors can watch the spectacular horseback demonstrations on Presa Street at Market Street, which will be temporarily closed during the morning performances to safely accommodate the horses and riders.

The day-long celebration includes performances by Danzavida de San Antonio Dance Company, cowboy ballads by the Sons of San Antone, cowboy poetry, trick roping demonstrations, storytelling and opportunities for everyone to try their own hand at roping with local rodeo cowboys.

Step Back in Time

History comes alive through immersive living history presentations that transport visitors to early Texas. Guests will meet historical reenactors portraying a Tejano ranchero and cowboy living in Texas during the 1820s and 1830s, sharing stories of ranch life, cattle culture and frontier living. Visitors will also encounter a Spanish Frontier Presidial Soldier stationed at Mission San Antonio de Valero—today's Alamo—from 1718 through the 1730s, offering a glimpse into the military and cultural foundations that helped establish San Antonio and the Spanish frontier.

Together, these living history experiences provide an engaging look at the people whose traditions ultimately evolved into the ranching culture that defines the American West.

Roll Up Your Sleeves and Join the Fun

National Day of the Cowboy is designed to be experienced—not just observed.

Families can create, play and explore through dozens of interactive activities throughout the museum, including:

- Screenprint a commemorative National Day of the Cowboy print to take home.
- Create your own vaquero hat and decorative spur.
- Try silversmith etching inspired by traditional Western craftsmanship.
- Learn rawhide braiding techniques.
- Build stick ponies before racing them around the museum.
- Practice your roping skills in the Lil' Buckaroo Corral.
- Toss felt horseshoes.
- Create accordion longhorns and other Western-inspired crafts.

Visitors can also meet Western artists demonstrating engraving, painting, sculpture and rawhide braiding throughout the day, offering a rare opportunity to see traditional craftsmanship in action.

Experience *Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story*

It's fitting that Día Nacional del Vaquero takes place alongside *Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story*, the Briscoe's landmark bilingual exhibition exploring nearly 400 years of Tejano history and culture. National Day of the Cowboy offers the perfect opportunity to experience the Briscoe's landmark bilingual exhibition, *Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story*, opening July 24 – the day before National Day of the Cowboy – and on view through Jan. 18, 2027.

The largest and most ambitious exhibition in the museum's history, *Tejano Legacy* explores Tejano history, culture and identity through more than 100 rare works of art and artifacts from collections throughout the United States and Mexico. Presented in celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the exhibition reveals how Tejanos and vaqueros helped shape the American West while offering deeper context for many of the traditions celebrated throughout National Day of the Cowboy.

See Selena Forever / Siempre Selena

Visitors can also experience *Selena Forever / Siempre Selena*, on view through Jan. 4, 2027, featuring monumental photographs by acclaimed San Antonio photographer John Dyer captured during Selena Quintanilla-Pérez's rise to international stardom.

Widely regarded as the most complete and comprehensive exhibition of large-scale Selena portraits ever presented, the exhibition also features never-before-seen boutique photographs, magazine covers and ephemera celebrating Selena's enduring influence on Tejano culture and South Texas.

Free Family Fun for Everyone

Whether they're watching charros, meeting frontier reenactors, creating a screenprinted keepsake, sampling cowboy grub from the chuck wagon or exploring the museum's summer exhibitions, visitors of every age will leave with a deeper appreciation for the people and traditions that gave rise to the American cowboy. Admission is free, and [online pre-registration](#) is encouraged for this popular annual celebration.

WHAT

National Day of the Cowboy
Día Nacional del Vaquero

WHEN

Saturday, July 25
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

WHERE

Briscoe Western Art Museum
210 W. Market Street
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Explore the American West in the Heart of Downtown San Antonio

Located on the River Walk near La Villita in downtown San Antonio, the Briscoe preserves and presents the art, history and culture of the American West through exhibitions and programming exploring Wildlife and the Land; Native People of the Americas; Tejanos, Vaqueros and Spanish heritage; and Cowboys and the American Frontier. The museum's campus includes the McNutt Sculpture Garden and features 35 sculptures portraying various aspects of Western life in the garden and around the museum's beautifully restored historic building that once housed the San Antonio Public Library. The museum is open Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday through Monday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and closed to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The Briscoe is located on the south end of the River Walk, near the Arneson River Theatre and La Villita, with convenient parking at the Riverbend Garage directly adjacent to the museum or one of many downtown surface lots. Museum hours, parking and admission details are available [online](#).

About [The Briscoe Western Art Museum](#): *Preserving and presenting the art, history and culture of the American West through engaging exhibitions, educational programs and public events reflective of the region's rich traditions and shared heritage, the Briscoe Western Art Museum is located on the San Antonio River Walk at 210 W. Market Street in the beautifully restored 1930s former San Antonio Public Library building. Named in honor of the late Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe Jr. and his wife, Janey Slaughter Briscoe, the museum includes the three-story Jack Guenther Pavilion, used for event rentals and programs, and the outdoor McNutt Sculpture Garden. Follow the Briscoe on social media, @BriscoeMuseum.*