



# Ask a Mexican

*Gustavo Arellano*

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**Ask a Mexican** Gustavo Arellano

**DEAR MEXICAN:**

**WHAT IS *¡ASK A MEXICAN!* ?**

Questions and answers about our spiciest Americans. I explore the clichés of lowriders, busboys, and housekeepers; drunks and scoundrels; heroes and celebrities; and most important, millions upon millions of law-abiding, patriotic American citizens and their illegal-immigrant cousins who represent some \$600 billion in economic power.

**WHY SHOULD I READ *¡ASK A MEXICAN!* ?**

At 37 million strong (or 13 percent of the U.S. population), Latinos have become America's largest minority -- and beaners make up some two-thirds of that number. I confront the bogeymen of racism, xenophobia, and ignorance prompted by such demographic changes through answering questions put to me by readers of my *¡Ask a Mexican!* column in California's *OC Weekly*. I challenge you to find a more entertaining way to immerse yourself in Mexican culture that doesn't involve a taco-and-enchilada combo.

**OKAY, WHY DO MEXICANS PARK THEIR CARS ON THE FRONT LAWN?**

Where do you want us to park them? The garage we rent out to a family of five? The backyard where we put up our recently immigrated cousins in tool-shack-cum-homes? The street with the red curbs recently approved by city planners? The driveway covered with construction materials for the latest expansion of *la casa*? The nearby school parking lot frequented by cholos on the prowl for a new radio? The lawn is the only spot Mexicans can park their cars without fear of break-ins, drunken crashes, or an unfortunate keying. Besides, what do you think protects us from drive-bys? The cops?

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