

Austin Cultura

KUT is partnering with Austin Vida to highlight arts and culture events happening in Austin's Latino community. Support comes from the Blanton Museum of Art and its new galleries dedicated to Latino art.

Celebrando Salsa and Taino heritage with Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard

KUT 90.5 | By [Juan Garcia](#)

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Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance / Puerto Rican Cultural Center

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center has been celebrating salsa and heritage for more than a decade.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center has been bringing Puerto Rican *sabór* to Austin for 27 years. Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard founded the organization after she moved to Austin in the early '90s. She said she loved Austin's rich Mexican and Mexican-American communities and danced for Austin's Ballet Folklórico for six years. But there was still something missing for her and her family.

"When my son was born I realized there was nothing for him here," she said. "And that was the moment when the Puerto Rican Cultural Center was born."

Since then, the organization has become a staple of the Latin-American cultural landscape of Austin. This month, the center is hosting its annual Salsa and Heritage Festival, as well as a Taino 101 event to help educate folks on the culture and traditions of the Taino indigenous people of Puerto Rico.

Salsa & Heritage Festival

The annual Celebrando Salsa and Heritage Festival as we know it started with a problem. The organization had been hosting an annual heritage project, but in 2011 the venue they used had to be renovated, which left the organization without a place for the festival.

“How do you find a theater in Austin when your show is in three months?” Maynard said. “So I had no choice but to start looking at ballrooms and community halls.”

The move to a different type of venue turned the heritage project into the first Salsa and Heritage Festival, and the response to the change led the organization to host the festival every year since.

This year's [Celebrando Salsa and Heritage Festival](#) takes place June 9 at the ACC Ballroom at Shalom Austin.

Taino 101

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center has been educating Austinites and attracting people from around the country through various workshops and classes based on Taino traditions. The Taino are an indigenous group from Puerto Rico, and Maynard traced her heritage back to the Taino two decades ago.

“What I discovered was not only was I Taino, but my blood in Puerto Rico went all the way back to the Arcaicos. The Arcaicos were los primeros de los primeros (the first of the first),” she said.

This year, the organization is hosting an event designed to introduce the culture and practices of the Taino people to anyone interested.

[Taino 101](#) takes place June 29 at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center on Tillery Street.

Mas Cultura

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Life & Arts



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