

= Azteca horse =

The Azteca is a horse breed from Mexico , with a subtype , called the " American Azteca " , found in the United States . They are well @-@ muscled horses that may be of any solid color , and the American Azteca may also have pinto coloration . Aztecas are known to compete in many western riding and some English riding disciplines . The Mexican registry for the original Azteca and the United States registries for the American Azteca have registration rules that vary in several key aspects , including ancestral bloodlines and requirements for physical inspections . The Azteca was first developed in Mexico in 1972 , from a blend of Andalusian , American Quarter Horse and Mexican Criollo bloodlines . From there , they spread to the United States , where American Paint Horse blood was added .

= = Breed characteristics = =

The three foundation breeds of the Azteca are the Andalusian (defined by the Mexican registry as either Pura Raza Española or Lusitano) , American Quarter Horse , and Mexican Criollo or Criollo militar . They were chosen to produce a breed that combined athletic ability with a good temperament and certain physical characteristics . Azteca stallions and geldings measure between 15 and 16 @.@ 1 hands (60 and 65 inches , 152 and 165 cm) at the withers , while mares stand between 14 @.@ 3 and 16 hands (59 and 64 inches , 150 and 163 cm) . The ideal height is 14 @.@ 3 ? 15 @.@ 1 hands (59 ? 61 inches , 150 ? 155 cm) . Both sexes usually weigh from 1 @,@ 000 to 1 @,@ 200 pounds (450 to 540 kg) . The facial profile of the breed is straight or convex and the neck slightly arched . Overall , they are well @-@ muscled horses , with broad croup and chest , as well as long , sloping shoulders . Gaits are free and mobile , with natural collection derived from the Andalusian ancestry of the breed . The breed is found in all solid colors , although gray is most often seen . White markings are allowed on the face and lower legs by breed associations . The American Azteca registry also allows non @-@ solid pinto coloration .

= = = Registration = = =

According to the breed standard of the Mexican registry , Azteca horses cannot have more than 75 percent of their parentage from any one of the foundation breeds (Andalusian , Quarter Horse and Mexican Criollo) ; Criollo blood may be no more than 50 % , and only from unregistered mares within Mexico . Horses are classified in one of six registration categories , designated with letters A through F , depending on their parentage . Only certain crosses between the different classes are permitted . In Mexico , Azteca horses must conform to a strict phenotype standard established by the Secretaría de Agricultura , Ganadería , Desarrollo Rural , Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA) , the Mexican agriculture ministry , which requires inspection of foals at seven months for the issue of a " birth certificate " ; a foal that does not meet the breed standards may be denied registration even if both parents are registered Aztecas approved for breeding . Full registration and approval for breeding are subject to a second and more detailed inspection at age three or more , and granted only to those horses that fully satisfy the requirements of the standard .

In the American Azteca registry , horses with American Paint Horse (APHA) breeding are also allowed . However , horses with more than 25 percent Thoroughbred blood in their pedigrees (common in many Paints and Quarter Horses) within four generations cannot be registered . American Aztecas have four categories of registration based on the relative degree of blood from each foundation breed , seeking an ideal blend of 3 / 8 Quarter Horse and 5 / 8 Andalusian . Unlike their Mexican counterparts , they do not have to go through physical inspections before being registered .

= = History = =

The Azteca was first bred in 1972 as a horse for charros , the traditional horsemen of Mexico .

Antonio Ariza Cañadilla , along with others , was instrumental in the creation of the Azteca horse as the national horse of Mexico and with its official recognition by the Mexican Department of Agriculture on November 4 , 1982 . Ariza used imported Andalusians , crossed with Quarter Horses and Criollos and began to breed the foundation horses of the Azteca breed at Rancho San Antonio near Texcoco , Mexico . Early in the Azteca 's history , breeders realized the need for a unified breeding program in order to produce horses that met the required characteristics . The Azteca Horse Research Center was created at Lake Texcoco , and in partnership with breeders developed the phenotype of the breed today . The first official Azteca was a stallion named Casarejo , who was a cross between an Andalusian stallion named Ocultado and a Quarter Horse mare named Americana . He was foaled at the Centro de Reproduccion Caballar Domecq in 1972 .

The Asociacion Mexicana de Criadores de Caballos de Raza Azteca , or Mexican Breeders Association for the Azteca Horse , is the original breed registry and still maintains the international registry . The International Azteca Horse Association and its regional affiliates was formed in 1992 . The majority of Aztecas are found in Mexico , and the Mexican association had registered between 10 @, @ 000 and 15 @, @ 000 horses as of 2005 , according to the Texas Department of Agriculture . The Mexican registry adds approximately 1 @, @ 000 horses per year .

The Azteca Horse Registry of America was formed in 1989 for registering the US portion of the breed , followed by the Azteca Horse Owners Association in 1996 as an owners association . This registry has slightly different registration and breeding rules , and is not approved by the Mexican government to register Azteca horses . The American registry , now called the American Azteca Horse International Association , allows the use of American Paint horses , which are essentially Quarter Horses with pinto coloration , if they have less than 25 percent Thoroughbred breeding . However , the US registry does not incorporate Criollo bloodlines . The Mexican registry allows only the blood of Quarter Horses , Andalusians and Criollos in its registered Aztecas .

= = Uses = =

Because of the breeds that make up the Azteca , they are known for their athleticism . They have been seen in competition in western riding events such as reining , cutting , team penning and roping , as well as English riding events such as dressage and other events such as polo and bullfighting . They are also used for pleasure riding .