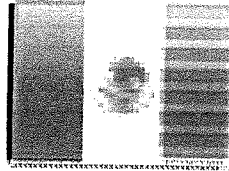


❁ Christmas in Mexico ❁



In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from the December 12th to January 6th.

From December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions or Posadas. Posada is Spanish for Inn or Lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for a room in an Inn. For the Posadas, the outside of houses are decorated with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns.

In each Posada, children are given candles and a board, with painted clay figures of Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph, to process round the streets with. They call at the houses of friends and neighbors and sing a song at each home. The song they sing is about Joseph and Mary asking for a room in the house. But the children are told that there is no room in the house and that they must go away. Eventually they are told there is room and are welcomed in! When the children go into the house they say prayers of thanks and then they have a party with food, games and fireworks.

Each night a different house holds the Posada party. At the final Posada on Christmas Eve, a manger and figures of shepherds are put on to the board. When the Posada house has been found, a baby Jesus is put into the manger and then families go to a midnight Church service. After the Church service there are more fireworks to celebrate the start of Christmas.

One game that is often played at Posada parties is Piñata. A piñata is a decorated clay or papier-mâché jar filled with sweets and hung from the ceiling or tree branch. The piñata is often decorated something like a ball with seven peaks around it. The peaks or spikes represent the 'seven deadly sins'. piñata's can also be in the form of an animal or bird (such as a donkey). To play the game, children are blind folded and take it in turns to tap the piñata with a stick until it splits open and the sweets pour out. Then the children rush to pick up as many sweets as they can!

In Mexico, children get their main presents at Epiphany (January 6th). In Mexico Epiphany is known as 'El Dia de los Reyes' (the day of The Three Kings). The presents are left by the Three Kings (or Magi). It's traditional to eat a special cake called 'Rosca de Reyes' (Three Kings Cake) on Epiphany. A figure of Baby Jesus is hidden inside the cake. Whoever has the baby Jesus in their piece of cake is the 'Godparent' of Jesus for that year on another important day, Candelaria which is on the 2nd February and is the end of the Mexican christmas celebrations!

In Mexico, presents might also be brought by 'El Niñito Dios' (baby Jesus) & Santo Clós (Santa Claus)

February 2nd 'Candelaria' (it's called 'Candlemas' in many parts of the world) is the day when Christians remember when Jesus was taken to the Temple as a baby and officially named. Lots of Mexicans have a party for Candelaria.

The largest ever Angel Ornament was made in Mexico. It was made in January 2001 by Sergio Rodriguez in the town of Nuevo León. The angel was 18' 3" high and had wing span of 11' 9"! Perhaps the most amazing thing about the angel was that it was completely made out of old beer bottles, 2946 of them!!