

Christmas christmas carols with religious connotations that are

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



Christmas practices evolve from time to time. For some not too much changes they just become practices that are passed on from generation to generation. These Christmas practices are then what create a part of a person's culture. In Mexico, despite the predominately Catholic influence, Christmas season shows the unity that exists within their general population disregarding nationality or other religions. In Mexico, the Christmas culture has formed in its way that dates back centuries ago with the mixture of "native Indigenes, African Slaves, and Spanish colonizers" (Kastelein, 82-83). These traditions and customs are still prevalent today and consist of music, lights, parties and food but what's most traditional about Christmas in Mexico are the villancicos, and Las Posadas, or Novenas. A good percentage of Mexico's general population follow the Catholic religion where Christmas is vital. Christmas celebrations in Mexico generally begin from December 12th to January 6th.

As Barbara Kastelein notes, December 12th is a religious holiday for Catholics that celebrate and honor the Virgin of Guadalupe, the mother of God. From December 16th to Christmas Eve children perform the Posada processions. There are typically nine Posadas which celebrate and symbolize the story of Joseph and Mary when they were in search for somewhere to stay (Kastelein, 2001). Each night a different household hosts the Posada, and at the final Posada which is on Christmas Eve families go to church to listen to mass at nighttime. During these Posada festivities, there is one game that is often played by children and it's called the Piñata. A piñata is a decorated ball filled with candy and other sweets inside and has seven spikes sticking out that represent the seven deadly sins.

The Piñata has now been used for other celebrations like birthdays but it is still very prevalent during the Christmas season with Mexican traditions. Moving on, Villancicos are Christmas carols with religious connotations that are used in various forms to celebrate the arrival of Jesus (Kastelein, 2001). “Villancicos originated in medieval Spain and were very popular in the late 18th century”. In the late 20th century the term villancicos was seemingly replaced with what we know of today as Christmas carols. Thus, carols sung in Mexico during the Christmas season more so than ever seem to advertise Catholicism. Mexican households that live within the rural areas decorate with flowers and evergreens (Kastelein, 2001).

Every night there are many “ groups of Santos peregrinos or holy pilgrims that assemble for the procession of Las Posadas” (Kastelein, 83). These groups of holy pilgrims will carry candles and sing along the way. In preparation for Noche Buena, families will attend the Misa Del Gallo, or Rooster Mass which is during the night of December 24th (Kastelein, 2001). Another tradition during the Christmas season that is very popular in Mexico are Pastorelas. What that is-is a form of amusement by influential Catholic followers that reenact bible passages in a way to allow their audience to firmly believe the true meaning of Christmas and Jesus. The Christmas tree was introduced to Mexican culture, influenced by American culture, but with the slight difference that in a Catholic Mexican household, the Nativity scene is significantly much more symbolic in which it symbolizes Jesus birth. Christmas trees have now become popular in Mexico however the Nativity scene still remains as the most important decoration.

Another popular decoration in Mexico are Noche Buenas which in the United States are red poinsettia flowers (Kastelein, 83). Here is a quick story of Noche Buena...” There is a Mexican legend about how the flowers came to be associated with Christmas . . . One Christmas Eve (nochebuena) a poor girl picked a few weeds to bring to church for the baby Jesus, for she could not afford anything else. The other people in her neighborhood looked down on her, but she believed that Jesus would appreciate any gift given in love. When she arrived at church, the weeds bloomed into a wonderful bunch of red flowers with thick green leaves. Then all the people around knew that they had witnessed a true Christmas miracle” (McKeown, 2017).

On a final note, traditionally in Mexico, El Nino Jesus or Christ Child receives gifts instead from the three kings instead of Santa. Also, children in Mexico expect gifts on January 6th which is known as el Dia de los Reyes. El Dia de los Reyes is celebrated to honor the wise men, also known as the three kings, and is the when the three kings gave gifts to baby Jesus. This day is the end of Mexico’s Catholic Christmas festivities and celebrations. As this closes Christmas celebrations, el Dia de los Reyes Mexican households will serve Rosca de Reyes, or cake.

Rosca is an oval shaped cake which is intended to symbolize a crown and inside the Rosca there is a small piece of plastic doll which is supposed to represent baby Jesus. The meaning behind the plastic doll hiding somewhere inside the cake tells us the story of when baby Jesus was hiding from King Herod’s followers. The Rosca’s are decorated with candied fruits which symbolize the jewels that you would typically see on a crown. When it’s time

to slice the cake up and share with all your guest whoever gets the piece with the doll inside must then host a part on February the 2nd.