



FESTIVALS IN MEXICO

Mexican Independence Day is 16th September. It commemorates this date in 1810, when a priest called on his people to fight for their independence from Spain. This was eventually gained in 1821. On 15th September at midnight, in towns and cities all over Mexico, the mayor recites a speech, at the end of which the crowd respond with three shouts of 'Viva Mexico!' Sunrise on the 16th sees the beginning of a day's celebrations which include military parades, fairs, dancing, music, food and fireworks.



Military parade celebrating Mexican Independence Day



An ofrenda (altar) to honour the dead

The Day of the Dead (called Día de los Muertos in Mexico) is a three-day celebration from October 31st to November 2nd, where families and friends come together to remember loved ones who have died. People visit cemeteries and create altars called ofrendas to honour the dead, decorating them with calaveras (skulls made from sugar), Aztec marigolds and the favourite food and drink of the loved one. Traditional foods that are eaten during this festival include pan de muerto, which is a type of sweet bread. The favourite foods of the deceased loved one are also eaten.

The Christmas season in Mexico begins on 16th December with posadas. These are reenactments by children of the journey that Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem. They go from door to door in their neighbourhood, seeking shelter. Only at the last house are they welcomed in, and a party commences! Traditionally, Mexican children receive their presents on 6th January, the Día de los Santos Reyes (Three Kings Day). Nacimientos (large nativity scenes) are more popular as decorations than Christmas trees. 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish is 'Feliz Navidad'.



Nacimiento (nativity scene)

