



CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO

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Basic facts

- Because around 80% of Mexicans identify as Catholic, Christmas in Mexico is a very popular holiday.
- Mix of Spanish and native traditions, with a little of German and U.S. traditions
- In Mexico people celebrate Christmas from **December 12** to **January 6**, with an extra holiday on February 2 (*La Candelaria*)
- Christmas shopping season starts in November
- Main event is Christmas Eve

Most important events during Christmas time

- Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe (*Dia de la Virgin de Guadalupe*) - December 12
- Las Pasadas (December 16 – December 24)
- Christmas Eve (*Nochebuena*) - December 24
- Christmas Day (*Navidad*) – December 25
- Day of the Sainted Innocents (*Dia de los Santos Inocentes*) – December 28
- Three Kings Day (*Dia de Los Tres Reyes Magos*) – January 6
- Candlemas (*La Candelaria*) – February 2

Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe



- Pilgrims from all over the country travel to the Basilica of Guadalupe, a church located in the heart of Mexico City
- There are fireworks, parades and live musical performances
- People eat buñuelos, the popular Christmastime food

Las Posadas



- Posadas celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay
- Children walk from house to house singing the traditional Las Posadas song and asking homeowners to let them in
- Every night, the processions end at a different house for a fiesta, with a lot of food, drink and *piñatas*

Christmas Eve - Nochebuena

- Like in many countries, this is a family day. After final Posada in the evening people have the main Christmas meal. Popular dishes are *Pozole* (a thick soup made with corn and meat), roast turkey, roast pork, *romeritos* (a green vegetable cooked with potatoes and shrimps) and there are salads served as side dishes such as Ensalada Nochebuena (Christmas Eve salad). For dessert they have *buñuelos* - fried pastries with sugar and cinnamon or a hot sugar syrup.
- At midnight many people go to a Midnight Mass service, known as the '*Misa de Gallo*' (Mass of the Rooster - people have to wake up early like Roosters). There are also lots of fireworks to celebrate Christmas Day.

Dia de Los Santos Inocentes

- Very similar to our April Fools' Day celebrated in Poland on April 1 – telling people innocent lies, making pranks etc.
- This day is to honor the babies ordered to be killed by King Herod

El Dia de Los Tres Reyes

- Presents!!!
- Presents are left by Three Kings (or Three Wise Man).
- Children leave a shoe out on the night before, in hopes that the Wise Men might leave something for them.
- On the next day there is a tradition to eat a special cake called '*Rosca de Reyes*' (Three Kings Cake) - a sweet round cake with candied fruits

La Candelaria (the Candles)



- This is the final holiday related to Christmas in Mexico, and many people have large parties on this day. Some parts of Mexico, such as in Veracruz, host large festivals with parades and bullfighting

Other Christmas traditions in Mexico

- Nativity scenes (Nacimiento - szopka), sometimes very large – very popular in Mexico
- Santa Claus was not popular until mid-20th century
- There are local traditions, like Noche de las Rabanos (“Night of the Radishes”) in Oaxaca City on December 23rd – presenting figurines carved in local radishes
- Christmas food!

Traditional Christmas Food (1)

Buñuelos



Pozole



Traditional Christmas Food (2)

Ensalada Nochebuena



Romeritos

