

Christmas in Mexico

Written by Kristy Peña

Mexican culture is a mixture of catholic and indigenous believes. We start preparing for Christmas nine days before December 24th. This means that on December 16th the festivities begin with the first Posada, a celebration with a great religious charge where people 'accompany', in a procession, the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph while they look for a posada in Bethlehem where the baby Jesus can be born. On that day, participants decide how many Posadas they will celebrate this year and where Mary and Joseph will stay. The POSADA is celebrated in the streets and in the houses, and people gather to sing and dance as well as to pray litanies, all is surrounded by lights and flares that decorate the houses. Additionally, we shall prepare a piñata, which is usually made of clay or cardboard and is shaped like a star with seven spikes, each of which symbolizes a capital sin. Inside it there are usually candies, fruits and other prizes, but to get them you must hit the piñata with a stick and with your eyes covered with a scarf that represents blind faith. Finally, a Pastorela shall be organized. It is a play or theatrical representations of the adventures that the shepherds went through on their pilgrimage to Bethlehem.

In my house we prepare several dishes for dinner on 24th of December. Here is the list of what we have for that day: Codfish "Vizcaino Style"; Christmas turkey stuffed with an infinity of flavors, as well as bathed in different sauces; Romeritos (leaves of a quelite that grows in the milpa) bathed with mole, a chocolate souce; the fruit punch, prepared with tamarind, pieces of sugar cane, apple, guava, tejocotes and prunes; Guava Atole, a drink with Aztec origin because at this time corn was consumed a lot, it is very traditional in Mexico and other countries; and Christmas Apple Salad, which is a very rich dessert that includes pineapple, nuts, raisins, apples and sour cream .

FRUIT PUNCH

Ingredients

- 4 Liters of water
- 1 large pylon cone or 400 grams of brown sugar
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 500 grams of tejocotes*
- 750 grams of guavas (about 12 medium guavas)
- ¾ cup of chopped prunes**
- 1½ cup of chopped apples
- 1 cup of chopped pear
- ½ cup of raisins
- 3 pieces of sugar cane about 15 cm, long cut in four pieces each.
- 1 cup of peeled tamarind pods or 1 cup of hibiscus flowers ***
- Ron or eau-de-vie to taste



Source of Picture: <https://www.mexicodestinos.com/blog/20-deliciosos-platillos-para-cenar-en-navidad/>

Step by step preparation

- Place water in a large pot.
- Add the piloncillo (or brown sugar) and cinnamon, cook for about 15 minutes. If you are using fresh Tejocotes, add them with the piloncillo and the cinnamon, as they take longer to soften.
- Add the chopped guavas, apples and prunes along with the rest of the ingredients, such as pieces of sugar cane, tamarind pods or Jamaica flowers. If you are using the canned version of the tejocotes, add them in this step.
- Simmer for approximately 1 hour. Serve hot in cups, serve some fruit and add rum to taste.

Notes

This recipe requires some traditional ingredients, such as cinnamon, tejocotes (a small yellow fruit that resembles wild apples), piloncillo (also known as panela in other countries), pieces of sugar cane and seasonal fruits.

* If you don't find all the ingredients like tejocotes, you can make this drink without them.

** Other dried fruits can be used as a substitute.

*** Sometimes I just add the tamarind pods and other times just the hibiscus flowers. I rarely use both at the same time and it still comes out very tasty. The reason for this is because I don't always find the tamarinds.

Link for PUNCH recipe in Spanish:

<https://www.mexicoenmicocina.com/ponche-navideno/>

Link for the codfish recipe:

<https://www.mexicoenmicocina.com/bacalao-a-la-vizcaina-estilo-mexicano/>

More info about Christmas in Mexico

<https://www.notimerica.com/cultura/noticia-celebra-navidad-mexico-20141204135536.html>