

Latin American Festivals

By Rosie Ray-Smith, Chloe Wu, and Venetia Satow

Oruro Carnival, Bolivia

The normally sleepy Oruro comes alive each year on the Saturday before Ash Wednesday, hosting the world renowned Carnival. Spectacular folk dances, lavish costumes, unique crafts, vibrant music, and up to 20 hours of continuous partying are included in the special festival.

The Oruro Carnival in Bolivia, attracting annual crowds of up to 400,000 people. Although the festival is celebrated throughout most of the nation, Oruro is undoubtedly the most famous, providing all those involved with a memorable experience.



History of Oruro Carnival

The ancient town of Uru Uru, there was a religious destination for the Aymara and Quechua people of the Andes long before Spanish settlement. Locals, praying for safety and offering thanks to Pachamama, will worship Andean deities. By celebrating Ito, the religious festival from which Carnival is thought to have originated, the Uru people often worshipped their gods. The Spanish founded today's Oruro in 1606 using the ground, already mined by the indigenous population, as a basis for the rich minerals in the surrounding hills. The locals were used as slaves for the Europeans who conquered their religion with the advent of Christianity, in combination with their land being ripped away.



The Carnival

Not only does Carnival tell the story of how the Spaniards defeated the Aymara and Quechua people of Bolivia using a combination of dance, music and costume, but it promotes good versus bad along with the rich cultural identity of Oruro. In the endless stream of folk dances performed during Carnival, Oruro's interesting history, varied culture and religious presence are most evident. The festival is attended by over 50 folk groups made up of about 20,000 dancers representing the different ethnic groups in Bolivia. La Diablada, or Dance of the Demons, is arguably the most popular folk dance, a tradition representing the triumph of good over evil and one that has remained untouched since colonial times.



Foods at Carnaval de Oruro are mostly snacks

- Humitas
- Saltenas
- Majao
- Silpancho
- Cocadas
- Manjar Blanco
- Helado de Canela



2021 Carnaval de Oruro will begin on Saturday, 6 February
and ends on Tuesday, 16 February

The frenzied dances, colourful dresses, traditional drinks and upbeat music would thrill travellers taking part in the Carnival. A number of water cannons, water guns and spray foam are used in the festivities, but prepare to get soaked regardless of the day you attend. It is also worth noting that Oruro is 3700 metres above sea level, which means that travellers can have time to adapt to the altitude, take it easy, skip alcohol and drink plenty of water. It even gets cold at night, so wear light and cosy layers.

FIESTA DE LA VENDIMIA ARGENTINA

ABOUT FIESTA DE LA VENDIMIA

Fiesta Nacional de la Vendimia also known as the Grape Harvest National Festival celebrates wine and the winemaking industry which takes place annually in Mendoza City, Argentina. It is one of the most important festivals in the country, attracting large numbers of tourists to the region.



HISTORY

The first vendimia celebrations in Mendoza Province occurred in the 17th Century. The first official valendimia festival took place in 1936. Recently Mendoza's Vendimia ranked number two in National Geographic's Top 10 World's Harvest Festivals, after the Thanksgiving celebrations in Plymouth Plantation, Massachusetts.



EXPERIENCE

You can try a wide variety of wine you have never even heard of at this festival.

Furthermore, there are parades with tons of confetti and fireworks flying through the air, which definitely isn't something you see every day!



ENTRANCE FEE

The entrance fee to Fiesta De La Vendimia is from £4.2 to £5.6.

MISTURA

Peru's ultimate food festival

ABOUT MISTURA

In Spanish, "La mistura" means combination, and this is certainly the most fitting name for Latin America's largest food festival. It is held in Lima around September every year and lasts for ten days. Mistura is to show the rich biodiversity and wealth. Each year in Mistura, there are not only more than 50 restaurants, 70 trucks and about 16 rustic kitchens but there are also regional cuisines and a wide choice of drinks. Entrance fee varies between £3.76 and £6.24 and once inside you can purchase coloured coupons at the kiosks on your left which allow you to buy lunch and drinks at the food dining arena later. You can experience trying lots of different new cuisines at this festival.



HISTORY OF MISTURA

Mistura started in 2008 and was born as a way to celebrate the gastronomic achievements of Peru. This festival has helped put Lima on the map when it comes to world-class, epicurean cuisine. In its first year, Mistura Peru drew 30,000 attendees, and in later years drew as many as 600,000 visitors over the course of its 10 days. In more recent years, there has been a bit of reduced attendance, especially when the event moved to Rimac rather than the centrally-located, coastal Costa Verde of Lima in 2017. This event drew approximately 300,000 festival-goers.

Día de Muertos

When and where?

The Día de Muertos Festival is held every year from November 1st to November 2nd, in Mexico. It celebrates the Day of the Dead, which is a celebration of life and death.

Parade

Every year, for the festival there is a big parade in Mexico City where there are a lot of Day of the Dead themed floats, and costumes like the ones shown in the photo to the right. People also dress up in a lot of make up and paint skulls on their faces and put flowers on their heads, to bring attention to the fact that skulls and the dead don't have to be scary, like at halloween.



Food that is served at the Día de Muertos Festival

At the Dia de Muertos Festival, they have a lot of amazing food from traditional recipes that are normally made for this holiday. There are dishes such as a potato dish called the *Potato Pan De Muerto*, and *Guatemalan Fiambré* which is a big salad that families make a few days before the Day of the Dead all together, with lots of different types of cheeses, cold cuts, and vegetables.



Día de Muertos in 2020?

The Día de Muertos Festival has been held online this year, but has still managed to have some amazing displays such as artist and cooking demonstrations, La Luz de Luna and Mariachi Pasion. There were also family activities such as paper flower making, altar making, and paper picador. They also got to organise some museum tours that you could book for you and your family.

FERIA DE LAS FLORES

When and where?

The Feria de las Flores is held every year from the last Friday in July, until either the 1st or the 2nd of August. It is held in Medellín, in Columbia. It is held then because this is when 'the city of eternal spring', Medellín, blooms.

A history of the Feria de las Flores

Feria de las Flores translates as 'The Festival of the Flowers', and is a cultural festival that started in 1957. It is celebrated as a tribute to the flourishing flower business in that area. It was started by Arturo Uribe then to create awareness about their area, and to bring tourism to there, to help the economy. Across is a photo of a woman carrying a large and very pretty basket of flowers. It was taken in the first year that the festival was held.



The Parade

In the parade, there are many groups of people who dress up in traditional matching costumes, like the ones in the photo on the left. There are groups such as The Parade of Silleteros, which is a group of people who walk in the parade holding beautiful, and almost flat, flower arrangements like the one to the left on the bottom. There is also The Parade of Old Cars, The Parade of Stair Cars, and a trail ride through town on horses. Additionally, there is an Exhibition of Orchids, Flowers and Crafts, The Equine Fair and many other very interesting activities, and other things to see.



Food

At the Feria de las Flores, they serve traditional Colombian foods like tamales, Caldo de Costilla, sancocho, etc.

The Final Ranking :

1. Fiesta de la Vendimia
2. Mistura
3. Feria de las Flores
4. Dia de Muertos
5. Oruro Carnival

