

EASTER IN SPAIN

HOLY WEEK or SEMANA SANTA

"Holy Week" or "Semana Santa" is the week leading up to the Easter weekend, from Palm Sunday to Easter Day in Spain which is celebrated with a great deal of emotion. All day and night the streets are filled with the beat of the drums, masses of colourful flowers, and the consummate art of religious sculpture. Because the week consists of processions in which enormous "pasos" (floats) are carried around the streets by teams of "costaleros" (bearers) followed by hundreds of "nazarenos" (penitents). Therefore, it is a religious holiday.

Easter week is celebrated in every city, town and village in Spain. But, there are some differences between Spanish regions. For example, it is considered a glamorous celebration in the region of Andalusia, while in Castile and Leon can be seen more sombre and solemn processions.



HOLY WEEK

SEMANA SANTA

"Semana Santa" processions are also known as penance processions, and involve "nazarenos", members of the brotherhood, parading from their church to the city's cathedral.

Processions are organized by "hermandades" and "cofradías", (religious brotherhoods) and penitents are members of those brotherhoods. Many of them dates back to the Middle Ages.

The penitents dress in penitential clothes with "capitores" (hoods) on their heads which hides their identity, so God is the only one who knows who they are.

"Pasos" are floats that represent scenes of the events of Jesus Christ's passion or images of the Virgin Mary. The sculptures are really old and ancient and they are considered pieces of art. They are very important for the culture and spiritual Catholic population.

There are two or three "pasos" in each procession. The "pasos" dedicated to Jesus uses figures of wood, wax, and they are covered in gold. The "pasos" dedicated to the Virgin Mary are usually covered in silver.



Music also plays an important part in "Semana Santa" processions, most are accompanied by live marching bands that play religious music. Also incense smell has an important role in the processions.



PROCESSIONS ON THE
STREET (SPAIN)

INCENSE SMELL