

Diálogos

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Calendar, Trivia, News & Notes



Call: 952 933 9940

E-mail: dialogos@spanishin.us

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Calendar of Activities

December 16-24: Las Posadas, Mexican traditional re-enactment of the holy family's pilgrimage to Bethlehem.

December 25: La Navidad

December 28: Día de los inocentes (Day of the Ingenuine), akin to what's known as "April Fool's Day"

This Holiday, Don't Forget Your Spanish

New Classes Start January 8; Sign Up Today!

Bring a Friend to the Winter Open House on January 3

The holidays are upon us, so in this issue we share some of our favorite traditions of the season: Las Posadas, Año Nuevo, Día de los Reyes, and more. We can almost taste those holiday treats.

We also thank our current students for making Fall 2006 **our busiest session ever!** If you – or a friend or family member – have “learn Spanish” or “travel abroad” on your 2007 wish list, be sure to call now and reserve your spot in our January 2007 session. New classes start January 8.

Important Reminders:

- Spanish Institute gift certificates make great stocking stuffers!
- New classes for all levels start January 8. See our complete schedule at www.spanishin.us/class
- You're invited to our winter Open House on Wednesday, January 3, 5-7 p.m. at the Spanish Institute in Edina. Bring a friend!

New student and not sure which course is right for you? Call us! We teach immersion courses for all ages, levels, and abilities. Our free placement process and small class sizes ensure each student enrolls in the right course. Call 952-933-9940.

¡Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!

~ The Staff of the Spanish Institute ~

December 31: Noche Vieja, celebrated in Spain and Latin America by eating 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight.

January 1: Año Nuevo

January 3: Open House at the Spanish Institute, Edina, from 5-7 p.m. www.spanishin.us

January 6: Día de los Reyes

January 8: New classes start at the Spanish Institute, Edina. [Enroll today!](#)

February 14: Día del amor y la amistad (día de San Valentín)

February (second half - dates vary): Carnaval – Music, dance, and mascarades.

Holiday Trivia

Christmas and New Year's require a winter vocabulary all their own. See if you can match the Spanish translation of some of our favorite words and phrases.

1. Flor de Nochebuena
 2. Nieve
 3. Nacimiento o Belén o Pesebre
 4. Arbol de Navidad
 5. Villancicos
 6. Buenos propósitos
 7. Rompopo
 8. Feliz Navidad
 9. Feliz año nuevo
 10. Regalos
 11. Noche Buena
 12. Noche Vieja
 13. Castañas
-
- A. Egg-nog
 - B. Christmas tree
 - C. New Year's Eve
 - D. Snow

Gift Certificates

Give the Gift of Learning this Holiday

This year, skip the lumpy sweaters and noisy video games. Forget fighting crowds and standing in long lines at the mall. When it comes to gifts, give someone you love the gift of lifelong learning with a chance to study Spanish.

The Spanish Institute offers gift certificates for all our courses, and for books and materials. Certificates are valid for 12 months and enable the recipient to register for any of our 10-week programs. They're perfect for first-time learners or busy adults looking to brush up on past skills. Pay by credit card, cash, or check.

To purchase a gift certificate, contact us:

Call: 952-933-9940

E-mail: dialogos@spanishin.us

Arts & Culture: Holiday Traditions in Spanish-Speaking Countries

Like their European counterparts, most traditional holiday festivities in Spanish-speaking countries trace their roots to religious origins. In the case of Latin America and Spain, Catholic beliefs influenced most early activities. While the most common seasonal decoration remains the nativity scene, showing baby Jesus, virgin Mary, Joseph, and the *Reyes Magos*, in recent decades, more secular elements such as trees and Santa Claus have filtered in as well.

Here we share four holiday favorites:

Las Posadas: During the nine days before Christmas, each evening family and friends in Mexico re-enact Mary and Joseph's pilgrimage to Bethlehem asking for a place to stay. Carrying candles, groups go door-to-door to pre-arranged houses in the neighborhood and ask for food and shelter. Just as it happened to Mary and Joseph, they are refused at all but the last home, where they are welcomed inside for celebration and to break a *piñata*. Often the gathering turns into a party where all enjoy dinner and a mulled fruit drink known as *ponche*.

The well-known **piñata** originated as part of *Las Posadas*. Early *piñatas* were made of a light

- E. Merry Christmas
- F. Gifts
- G. Poinsettia
- H. New year's resolution
- I. Christmas carols
- J. Happy New Year
- K Chestnuts
- L. Nativity scene
- M. Christmas Eve

(Answers appear at the end of this newsletter.)

News & Notes

Conversation Circles

Are you proficient in Spanish and looking for an opportunity to maintain your skills? Join us the first and third Thursdays of each month for Spanish Conversation Circles. Get details at www.spanishin.us, or contact us at 952-933- 9940.

Did you know?

The *piñata* is a tradition that came to Mexico through Catholicism, that eventually worked its way into popular celebrations, which explains how the tradition that was lost in Europe long ago, was preserved in Mexico.

The *poinsettia* plant originated in Mexico where it is known as *Flor de Nochebuena*. The name poinsettia became well-known when it was brought to the United States in the nineteenth century by Dr. Joel Poinsett. The Aztecs cultivated the plant calling it *cuitlaxochitl* (flower that withers).

Instructor on the rise

Jose Angel Martínez, Instructor at the Spanish Institute, has been selected by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Minnesota as one of the "25 on the Rise" prominent young latino professionals

ceramic material and a paper covering shaped to represent the Star of Bethlehem. Today children still commemorate *Las Posadas* by breaking the gift- and candy-filled *piñata*.

Noche Vieja - Año Nuevo: *Noche Vieja* is the celebration that bids farewell to the past year. Ringing in the New Year in Spanish-speaking countries involves a fun holiday activity with fruit. As the clock strikes midnight, revelers must eat one grape for each of the 12 chimes (a feat more difficult than it sounds!). Each grape represents a wish for the new year. Spanish wine producers originated the tradition as a way to utilize excess crops. Today, Spaniards consume tons of grapes on New Year's Eve.

Día de los Reyes: January 6, or Epiphany, brings the Day of the Three Kings to the Spanish-speaking world. For children, Los Reyes deliver gifts meant to represent the gold, frankincense and myrrh brought to the baby Jesus. Once the principle holiday when children received presents, over the years it has been complemented by receiving gifts on December 25, the traditional day of celebration abroad.

Children and adults celebrate with a traditional sweet bread known as *Rosca de los Reyes*, in which a tiny porcelain figurine of a baby is baked. In Mexico the person who receives the slice with the figurine will have to invite the others sharing the *Rosca* to a dinner of *tamales* and a corn-drink known as *atole* on February 2, the Day of the Candelaria, which is the end of the quarantine of the Virgin Mary. In Spain, the sweet bread is called *roscón*, and depending on the region, can have a dried broad bean baked into it as well as the figurine. Whoever bites into the figurine will be crowned as king of the house, or will have good fortune during the year, protected by the Three Kings. Whoever finds the bean will have to pay for the *roscón*.

Carnaval: This most colorful tradition, which is built on old pagan rituals later adopted by Catholicism, is still celebrated in many regions and cultures of the Hispanic countries at the start of Lent. In Latin America some *Carnaval* celebrations have left the religious aspect behind, highlighting its festive nature, while others retain the religious character in an

outstanding in their fields.

Christmas carols

If you would like to read the lyrics to Christmas carols in Spanish, visit

www.navidaddigital.com/villancicos

Quick Links...

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- [View class schedule](#)
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integrated mixture with ancient pre-hispanic traditions.

The most spectacular *carnavales* in Mexico are found in Mazatlan and Veracruz. Actually, Mazatlan boasts of having the third largest *carnaval* in the world (behind Rio de Janeiro and New Orleans),
www.carnavalmazatlan.net/index_en.php.

The *Carnaval* in Oruro, Bolivia, was declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2001,
www.unesco.org/bpi/intangible_heritage/bolivia.htm.

Class Spotlight: Beginner II

Build Confidence, Vocabulary with Next Beginner Class

After Beginner 1 you've acquired the Spanish skills to describe people's characteristics, family ties, speak of your profession, and master Spanish introductory phrases. What's next? Increasing your vocabulary, your grammar, and most of all, your confidence when speaking and understanding the Spanish language. It's all part of Beginner II classes at the Spanish Institute.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the class. I learned so much, and enjoyed doing it too," says one recent Beginner II student.

Beginner II continues the fundamentals of language and culture. Our small class sizes and focus on student participation make it easy and fun to learn.

"We got more than just language. Our instructor was excellent at encouraging participation and teaching real Spanish language and culture," notes another Beginner II learner.

Beginner II expands on basic conversation and reading skills, and continues to build vocabulary and self-expression. Students learn how to:

- Shop for goods and services, using the vocabulary for money, clothes, and personal

goods, and how to identify, select, and purchase items;

- Discuss and describe habits relative to health including the names of body parts and physical characteristics; topics related to stress, nutrition and emotional balance;
- Share information about work, discuss qualities, aptitudes and professional skills, common job-related questions, and employment experiences;
- Use irregular verbs, reflexive verbs, some forms of past-tense including past perfect and past participles.

To [enroll](#) or learn more,

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Trivia Answers: 1-G, 2-D, 3-L, 4-B, 5-I, 6-H, 7-A, 8-E, 9-J, 10-F, 11-M, 12-C, 13-K

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