

IBERIAN TRAVELER

Thursday, June 10, 2010

The crowd, 30 deep, gathers early along the barricades on Mercaderes the morning of the 7th for the first encierro, while we watch from one of our favorite balconies.



Your first morning in Pamplona

For many the day begins at dawn, for others yesterday never ended

By Iberian Traveler

A typical day of the fiesta begins in the early morning just before sunrise, except for those who have been up all night enjoying the myriad festival events. The main evening concert, *Plaza Abierta*, begins at midnight, not long after the fireworks display in the Park Ciudadela fills the night sky, and lasts until 3:30 am.

Others may have spent the night exploring the narrow streets of the old city, making the rounds of the bars that never close, except during the morning bull run.

Officially the city awakens each morning to the sounds of *La Pamplonesa*, the beloved city band, as it leaves the Plaza Consistorial at 6:45 am and begins its daily parade through the streets of the Casco Antiguo, the Old Quarter. But some of the Peña bands have been

serenading the old city in a virtual non-stop explosion of music since the fiesta began at noon on the 6th.



La Pamplonesa

We meet with our guides each morning in front of the Hotel Tres Reyes by 6:30 am, but leave a little earlier on the 7th and over the weekend when the crowd is the largest and the police close off access

to the running route before 7:00 to help control the number of runners.

There are a few places open to grab a coffee or a bite to eat dawn, but for most of us it's "bulls before breakfast". Thus begins a typical day of the fiesta in Pamplona.



Meeting with the guides at 6:00 am

An unforgettable 24 hours a typical day in Pamplona during the fiesta

By Iberian Traveler

6:00 am - Each morning the carpenters begin their job of erecting the final sections of the barricades that enclose the route of the *encierro*, the bull run.

6:30 am - Meet with the guides. The bars in the old city are open, offering a warm cup of soup for those who have been up all night.

6:45 am - The day begins with the official city band, La Pamplonesa, marching through the streets of the old city, awaking everyone with its familiar tunes.

7:00 am - Arrive at the balconies to await the rocket announcing the start of the start of the *encierro*.

8:00 am - The *encierro*, the running of the bulls, every morning from the 7th to the 14th.

8:15 am - *Desayuno*. It's time for breakfast and to try some *churros* and chocolate offered in many of the cafés. The very best *churros* can be found at the Churreria on Calle Mañueta, which only opens during the fiesta. Get there early and expect a very long line. But it's worth the wait!

9:00 am - *Baile de la Alpargata*, the "dance of the Espadrille", happens every day, from the 7th to the 14th, in the Nuevo Casino, the private social club in the Plaza del Castillo, open to members, friends, and our very fortunate Peña Seattle members.

9:30 am - Procession of *los Gigantes y Cabezudos* (Giants and Big heads) along with the Kilikis and Zaldikos, commences at the bus station. This year marks the 150th anniversary of Pamplona's *Gigantes y Cabezudos*.

9:30 am - *Tertulia del Encierro*, a discussion of the morning's run, lead by Javier Solano, TV commentator and author, in the Hotel Maisonnave.

10:00 am - Procession of San Fermín (7 July only) begins its slow march through the Casco Antiguo,

the old city, accompanied by the city band, the dancing *Gigantes y Cabezudos*, city officials and thousands of Pamplonicas.

11:00 am - *Espectáculos taurinos* (bullfighting shows) in the bullring, the *Concurso de Recortes*, the sport of bull leaping, dodging or pole vaulting over the bulls (10 July), and the *Concurso de anillas*, the art of placing rings on the bull's horns (11 July).

12:00 - *Festivales Folclóricos* (Folk Festivals) - rural sports, such as stone lifting and tree trunk chopping, *bertsolaris* (Basque singers) & recitals of *jotas* (traditional Navarran songs).

1:00 pm - *Apartado*, or the selection of the bulls from the steers, takes place in the bullring. This has become an essential social event of the fiesta each afternoon from the 6th to the 14th. Tickets required, and one should be in line by 12:30. Inside the corral area spectators sip sherry and eat *chistorra*, delicious Basque sausage, while waiting to view the bulls. Journalists snap photos and interview visiting dignitaries and celebrities. If interviewed, you'll find your picture in the next day's paper.



Meeting the matador Padilla after breakfast in the Nuevo Casino

1:30 pm - *Aperitivo y almuerzo* - It's time for an aperitif, maybe a *marianito*, vermouth with olives, and a snack before your long, leisurely lunch. If you don't attend the Apartado, then try some of the traditional *pintxos* (tapas) in the old city: Monasterio at the corner of Espoz & Mina, El Buralés or Café Roch, both on Calle Comedias, or the Hostería el Temple on Calle Curia.

2:30 - This is the hour when most Pamplonicas go for lunch. You will see the *Peñas*, the clubs that support the fiesta, enjoying their street lunches. If you want to dine in a restaurant, then reservations are required, and expect your meal to last until time for the afternoon bullfight!

5:30 pm - The *mulillas* (mules) and the music bands leave the Plaza Consistorial, heading down Calle Estafeta to the bullring.

6:30 pm - *Corrida de toros*, the bullfights begin in the Plaza de Toros. If you've been lucky enough to secure tickets, you should enter at 6:00 to give you time to rent a cushion, an *almohadilla*, grab a sandwich and/or drink (if you haven't brought a picnic basket) and find your way to your seat before the crush begins. And remember, no eating until after the 3rd bull!



Procession of San Fermín, 7 July

6:30 pm - *Festivales infantiles*, the children's festival with puppet shows, dances and music in the Plaza Conde de Rodezno. The official Children's Day will be 8 July.

8:30 pm - Live music concerts begins in the Paseo de Sarasate and Plaza de la Cruz (this is one for the seniors).

9:00 pm - *Txistularis y gaiteros*, flute players entertain every day in the Plaza del Castillo.

10:30 pm - *Toro de Fuego*, the bull of fire, each evening in the Plaza de Santiago (behind the Town Hall) to chase and entertain the children.

11:00 pm - *Fuegos artificiales*, the nightly international fireworks competition in the Citadel, Parque de la Ciudadela, from the 6th to the 14th. It's always a spectacular show!

11:00 pm - At nightfall, the *Encierriillo*, the little running of the bulls, from the 6th to the 13th when the bulls are moved from the lower corrals (Corrales del Gas) to the corral on Santo Domingo, where they will spend the night. No runners are allowed, just the bulls and steers to them the 440 meters. To watch this, you will need a special pass from the Town Hall.

11:30 pm - *Verbenas* - Dance to live music in the Plaza de la Cruz.

12:00 am - Plaza Abierta, the macro concert held in the Plaza del Castillo, with performances by artists such as Cuba's Septeto Santiaguero (12 July). These concerts go until 3:00 am. If you're a jazz fan, head to the Plaza de los Burgos at 12:30 to hear the groups taking part in Jazzfermín.

12:00 am (14 July) - *Pobre de mi*, the official closing candlelight ceremony, sadly marking the end of the fiesta, but beginning the countdown to next year's celebration. ¡Ya falta menos!