

Celebrating with the Giants of Pamplona

The Giants marked their 150th anniversary during this year's festival, Sanfermines 2010.



The eight giants in the annual procession of San Fermín along C/Mayor on 7 July

THE GIANTS AND THE CHILDREN OF PAMPLONA

Pamplona's famous Giants, the Kings & Queens of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, have been parading and dancing in the Procession of San Fermín and have been an indispensable part of the fiesta since the early 1860s. Six of the giants, with the exclusion of Rey Americano and Reina Americana (politics), traveled to New York for the World's Fair in October 1965 and paraded down Fifth Avenue, and all had a minor role in the 1957 film "The Sun Also Rises".

The children of Pamplona each have their favorite Gigantes, and as part of the festival tradition, children will relinquish and give their pacifiers to their favorite giant when they finally decide they no longer need them. By the afternoon of the 14th, when the giants head to their home base in the bus station to await the next fiesta, they are accompanied by a thousand children and their parents and are adorned with the dozens of colorful pacifiers they have collected during the nine days of the fiesta. Few visitors to the fiesta are aware of or get to see this special celebration as the giants make their final performance of the festival, exclusively for the children of Pamplona.

Navarra, the Land of the Giants

Each year Pamplona's eight legendary Giants play a major role in the Fiesta de San Fermín, but they are only the most famous of the more than 400 *Gigantes de Navarra*, the Giants of Navarra.

In the past 150 years they have crossed the ocean only once and in Europe have ventured outside their borders only to France.



A RARE FAMILY PHOTO



GETTING TO KNOW THE KILIKIS, CABEZUDOS & ZALDIKOS OF PAMPLONA

La Japonesa (1890)

Kiliki Caravinagre, Vinegar Face (1941)

La Abuela (1890)

Kiliki El Coletas (19??)

Kiliki Napoleón (1912)

Kiliki Patata (1912)

El Concejal (1890)

El Alcalde (1890)

A lone Zaldiko



Mingling with some of the Cabezudos, Kilikis & Zaldikos on C/Estafeta , 7 July 2010

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GIANTS OF PAMPLONA



Reina Americana

Virtually every municipality in Navarra, from Abárzuza and Ablitas to Yesa and Zizur Mayor, numbering 100 in total, have their own unique collection of Giants, Cabezudos and Kilikis, their own



One of the seven zaldikos playfully going after both children and adults with equal zeal with his foam rubber "weapon".

Each of the Pamplona Giants, even the heaviest, *Rey Africano* and *Rey Americano*, tipping the scales at 62.4 kilos (137 lbs.), is carried by a lone individual, part of a team that rotates the task as they parade and perform on the streets of the city and in its plazas, throughout the day. It is considered the highest of honors to be given the responsibility of carrying a Giant and performing their beautiful and captivating dances - *jotas*, polkas and waltzes.

The Giants dance to the tunes of a *dulzaina*, beginning their day at 9:30 each morning except on the morning of the 6th when they make their first appearance of the fiesta following the *chupinazo*, the electrifying opening ceremony held at noon in the town hall square.

The first official documents referring to the presence of the Giants in Pamplona dates from 1600, when they performed for the feast day of San Roque. The earliest Zaldiko, the dancing horse and rider, made its first appearance in the mid 16th century, as did the Kilikis. But a Royal Decree from King Carlos III in 1780, instigated by the clergy, prohibited the Giants from participating in any religious procession, deeming it inappropriate and irreverent.

So the Giants of Pamplona, which belonged to the cathedral, were left to gather dust, slowly deteriorating in the darkness until 1813, when a carpenter discovered them standing in a remote corner of the cathedral. Covered in debris, they were eventually restored and made their official reappearance in 1820.

Because the aging Giants continued to deteriorate with use, the City Council decided that new ones should be built. In 1860, Tadeo Amorena, a local artist, offered his talents (for free) to create two new replacements. These proved to be such a hit that Amorena was given the task of creating four more. He then set out to complete his vision: each pair of Giants, a King and a Queen, would represent the "four corners of the

world" - Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas (it appears that Amorena was unaware of Oceania). He completed his task in only two months.

The Giants, now 150 year old, were constructed using a light wood skeletal frame over which they wear elaborate, richly decorated costumes, along with lavish jewelry. Each of the Giants stands four meters (13.12 ft.) tall. The "lightest" of the Giants, the European Queen, weighs in at 56 kilos (123.5 lbs).

Over the years the Giants have acquired a royal entourage which now includes five **Cabezudos** (Big Heads), consisting of a Mayor, Councilor, Grandmother and two Japanese figures, six nameless **Zaldikos**, half horse, half man (a 7th was added this year, one of the originals). And finally the six beloved **Kilikis**, whose official function is to protect the Royals.

The Kilikis all have a name, and a personality - Caravinagre (Vinegar Face) is hard to miss, Verrugón (the one with a large wart at the tip of his nose), el Barbas (the bearded one), el Coletas (with the pig tail). And then there is Patata and Napoleón.



The Kilikis's and Zaldikos's non-official function is to entertain and lovingly "terrorize" the children during the fiesta, chasing them and "whacking" them (gently) with their weapon - a foam rubber filled sheepskin attached to a rope on a stick. The children in turn defend themselves and often "attack" in kind with their own foam rubber weapon - a constant, playful give and take.

Every child in Pamplona has his or her own favorite Kiliki, and parents often embroider the Kiliki's name on their children's traditional red kerchief, or *pañuelico*.