

## Las Posadas

One of the most popular Christmas traditions in Northern New Mexico is Las Posadas, a nine day celebration of religious observance beginning December 16 and ending December 24th. The ritual has been a tradition in Mexico for over 400 years. Many Mexican holidays include dramatizations of original events, a tradition which has its roots in the ritual of Bible plays used to teach the scriptures to a largely illiterate population in Europe as early as the 10th and 11th centuries.

“Posadas” is Spanish for “lodging” or accommodation” and Las Posadas is a traditional play enacted 9 days before Christmas telling the story of Joseph and Mary on their journey looking for a place to stay before their baby Jesus was born. Each day corresponds to one month that baby Jesus was carried in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

In Taos Las Posadas is celebrated throughout the county. It is a time to come together for nine days and nights of devotion to purification, meditation and getting in touch with the holiness of the season. The Posaditas go to different houses each night and are sent away, until the ninth night, when they are finally given posada (shelter). People along the route decorate their home entrances with farolitos to light the way and cook traditional foods like Tamales and biscochitos which are given to the posadistas. As part of the ceremony prayer is recited for the posadistas and community joining in the celebrations.

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**Las Posadas.** Las Posadas, (Spanish: “The Inns”) religious festival celebrated in Mexico and some parts of the United States between December 16 and 24. Las Posadas commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus.