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The festival of Las Fallas of Valencia is very ancient and was recorded for the first time in the 16th century although it is probably much older than that.

Many pagan cultures in Europe and elsewhere used to light bonfires to celebrate the beginning of each of the four seasons. Some introduced a puppet that symbolized a person hated by the village to be burned in these bonfires. Valencia started burning satiric rag dolls representing well known personages, along with the old wooden furniture they wanted to get rid of, in the bonfires for the festivity of Saint Joseph, patron saint of carpenters. With time, the dolls became more elaborate and ended up in whole satiric scenes being built for the sole purpose of being burned. This has culminated in the present day festivities with the different neighborhood making their own Fallas and competing with one another to gain the highest prize in the Fallas Contest.

Nowadays, it has become a tourist attraction and hundreds of thousands of visitors flock to Valencia just to watch this amazing burning of artistic sculptures.

The Festival starts in el Carmen, on the last Sunday in the month of February with the Crida. Music, bands, and the choosing of Fallas Queen of the year, signal the opening of the Festival. From then on until the 19th of March, the la Mascleta takes place every day in the City Hall Square at 2 pm, for 10 minutes.

What is La Mascleta?

Everything stops in Valencia for 10 minutes and the La Mascleta is all you can hear, as deafening gunpowder firecracker explosions create the ambiance of las Fallas and delight the whole of Valencia.

Every night fireworks are displayed in the old River Turia Gardens. The biggest display of all takes place at midnight of March 18th, known as the Night of Fire.

When the clock strikes midnight, the Crema takes place in the City Hall Square, which is enveloped in massive fireballs from the burning Fallas. In just a few minutes, money worth millions is burned and all the artistic work goes down in ashes.

Trajes de Fallera

Women and children wear the traditional colorful and ornamental Fallera dresses, and carry bouquets of red carnations or roses to the Basilica of Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados, the patron Saint of Valencia. These flowers will be woven in an artistic way to make a mantel that covers the statue of Mary.

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