San Antonio • Viva Fiesta!

Every April, the San Antonio community has a fiesta. Fiesta San Antonio is one of the largest and oldest celebrations in Texas. More than three million people attend. There are carnivals, parades, pageants and dances. The Fiesta also includes concerts, art work displays, sporting events and delicious food. Over 100 years ago, a simple flower parade began this custom. It was the beginning of what is now a ten day celebration. What started as a simple parade, is now called the “Battle of Flowers”. Today this flower parade marks the heart of Fiesta San Antonio.

History of Fiesta San Antonio

The first Battle of Flowers Parade was held on April 20, 1891. It started when the wife of a congressman wanted to honor the heroes of the battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto. At the Battle of San Jacinto, Texas gained its freedom from Mexico. The idea was to have a parade to honor these heroes. What started with one woman, then grew into a group of women. These women formed the Battle of Flowers Association. They had an actual “battle of flowers”. Ladies in horse drawn carriages threw flowers at each other. Other horse drawn vehicles were also part of the parade.

The parade was to be on April 21. The date had to be changed. It was changed when they found out that President Benjamin Harrison would be visiting San Antonio. On the day of the parade, it rained. The parade was held four days later. The president could not attend. He had to return to Washington.

Today, people in the parade lay wreaths on the front lawn of the Alamo. They do this to honor the heroes at the Alamo and San Jacinto.

Other Fiesta Events

Other events take place at Market Square and surrounding areas. The riverwalk is also the location of many other activities. One of these activities is the Texas Cavaliers’ River Parade. Beautifully decorated barges float down the river. Singers, musicians and live bands entertain everyone.

The final Fiesta event is the Fiesta Flambeau Parade. It passes through downtown San Antonio. It travels in front of the Alamo. This night parade is the largest lighted parade in the nation. It attracts thousands of visitors each year.

Fiesta Today

Today, there are over 150 events during Fiesta. The most popular Fiesta events include, A Night in Old San Antonio (NIOSA), Oysterbake, the Texas Cavaliers’, River Parade and the Battle of Flowers Parade.

There are many traditions that are part of Fiesta. One of these includes cracking cascarones over people’s heads. Those who go to Fiesta collect Fiesta medals, buttons and pins. The San Antonio community has a King Antonio, El Rey Feo (“the ugly king”). They also select a Fiesta Queen.