

- **Place:** Barranquilla, Atlántico
- **Region:** Caribbean
- **Date:** March 1 - 4, every year
- **Duration:** 4 days



### The Barranquilla Carnival

UNESCO honored the carnival of Barranquilla by declaring it a World Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. It is the most-awaited festival of the year by all who wish to enjoy four days of a cultural and folkloric event characterized by ethnic diversity, merriment, dance, music, and entertainment.

The Carnival ...of Barranquilla ... is the great stage where the Caribbean way of being is expressed by a gestural, graphic, verbal, and musical language; and dance, color, and costumes. / [Rafael Soto Mazenet](#) /

The carnival, described by photographer Enrique García as a thousand theater pieces in just one stage, is the most genuine expression of the Colombian people and a blend of colors, races, legends, gaiety, parties, and musical rhythms like *cumbia*, *mapalé*, *garabato* and *son del negro*.



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## Origins of the Barranquilla Carnival

It is the best example of a triple cultural fusion (European, African, and Indian) in which the Catholic festivities brought by the Spaniards from the Old World blended with aboriginal

ceremonies and the musical heritage of African slaves to become a spectacular folk festivity.

Barranquilla, the place where spider monkeys take you dancing and never let you go.

### Duration of the Carnival

The Carnival of Barranquilla begins four days before Ash Wednesday and reaches its climax the following Saturday during the Batalla de las Flores (battle of the flowers), where the gaiety and color of the Colombians come face to face in a unique battle of color, flowers, beauty, and peace.

### Carnival Days

The carnival takes place over the course of four days. Its most characteristic activities are the following:

**Batalla de las Flores** Since 1903, this Battle of the Flowers is the most symbolic of all celebrations, when the first battle took place and the typical carnival characters were incorporated: Rey Momo, María Moñitas, and Hombre Gaimán. The Batalla de las Flores is a parade with floats, dance groups, and costumed groups. Among the latter, the following stand out: the *marimondas*, hooded figures with long noses; and the *gigantonas*, dwarfs with large heads. The parade is headed by a float from which the queen of the carnival throws flowers while dancing accompanied by a large entourage of princes and princesses. The Grand Parade The Desfile de la Gran Parada (the great parade) takes place the following day, Carnival Sunday. The characters are the

*torito*

folk dances, the dance of

*the Garabato*

, and the dances of

*the hilanderas*

(spinners).

The two most characteristic dances of this parade are:

- *The cumbia*, a good example of the fusion of Indian, Black and White elements that simulates a couple courting and is characterized by the elegance and subtle movements of the woman's hips to the rhythm of *a tambora* (a kind of drum) and *a flauta de millo* (a kind of flute).

- *The garabato*, which symbolizes the victory of life over death.

## The 84th Street Parade

The Calle 84 Parade is a big festival that is full of carnival characters and costumes.

This is another party full of groups of people wearing costumes parading through the streets. The main feature of this parade is that the queen of the carnival dresses in black, representing the principal widow of Joselito Carnaval. The queen weeps without consolation until she faints. After this spectacle, dances, costumed groups, and *cumbiambas* (groups of full of carnival characters and costumes

*cumbia*

dancers) reappear to finish off with music and dance to the delight of the numerous public gathered on the sidewalks.

## The Funeral of Joselito Carnaval



The Barranquilla Carnival

It takes place the day before Ash Wednesday at the start of the Catholic Lent. Joselito is the most representative character of the Barranquilla Carnival; he symbolizes gaiety and festiveness, and dies after four days of intense partying. His body is cried upon and he is symbolically buried by the merry widows who shared his days of festiveness.

Joselito's funeral is a symbolic farewell "to the flesh". There is no single Joselito for the whole city. Anyone can tour the streets with a figure of Joselito. This is a frequent custom practiced by people of all ages, creeds, races, and sexes as a final indulgence before the start of Lent. Thus, Joselito's funeral marks the end of the feasts of the Dios Momo.

For further information, please visit the official website of [the Barranquilla Carnival](#) .

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