



MAYOS



ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

Los Mayos of Alhama de Murcia has evolved into a unique celebration in the Region of Murcia, being a popular custom that takes place the first weekend of May, thus regaining a tradition connected with the arrival of spring, rebirth of the land, floral ornaments and the Cruces de Mayo.

Though there are no known written references, its history dates back to the 20th century. Various testimonies of our older generations and oral traditions have led this search back to the 60's and the 70's.

On the 5th April 1982, Alhama de Murcia's council meeting approved the following: "A celebration renewing the traditions of the fiesta de los Mayos will be held the 1st May". These matters were officially dealt with in the council meeting on the 7th March 1983.



LA PLANTADA, THE "PLANTING" OF FIGURES

Alhama de Murcia awakes with the presence of some very interesting visitors, the Mayos. These so-called visitors are in fact representative figures, which are "planted" (placed) in front of the citizens' houses, squares, corners or public gardens in the dawn of the first day of May and then removed at dusk. The Mayos are

yesteryear fabric-made figures stuffed with straw, leaves, wool, or whatever is available, dressed with old garments and surrounded by flowers and ornaments. Special care is taken when modelling the faces and creating the costumes which characterize the scene characters, trying to obtain a result as human-looking as possible.

These figures help put across a specific situation that wants to be parodied or imitated by means of dialogues written in verse on small posters. The scenes created can be visited throughout the day and turn the streets of Alhama into an improvised ethnological museum.





THE CORREMAYOS

Introduced back in 1984, the Corremayos are large groups of people of all ages dressed in harlequin jesters costumes that roam around and visit the planted figures, the Mayos, one by one with the jingle of their bells. While on their visit they are normally treated to “casca-ruja” (nuts) and wine.

The Council of Government of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia declared this celebration of Regional Tourist Interest in 1990, granting the recognition needed to recover this ancient cultural tradition. The promotion, advertising and spreading of the Mayos was significant during these years, reaching high levels of participation thanks to numerous associations and individuals as well as tourists and visitors. The ongoing criteria for the evaluation of the Mayos, which was then established, classifies them according to the figures, the scenes, the written dialogues and the very nature of the Mayos in either traditional (old farming scenes, professions, etc.), original or critical (parodying characters or situations of social life).

Nowadays, the fiesta of the Mayos is a mixture of tradition, colour, music, spectacle and character that merge in the streets and squares of Albama de Murcia, leading to an explosion of joy that is a complete pleasure for the senses.



CORREMAYOS





CRUCES



THE MAY CROSSES

The fiesta de las Cruces is, without doubt, a beautiful tradition of religious character that has managed to survive throughout the years.

This peculiar symbology and ritual-laden celebration takes place on the 3rd May and, as in the case of the Mayos, incredible sets and scenes are displayed. In this case, the main component is a cross dressed in flowers and displayed in conjunction with ornaments and religious tokens such as rosaries and images.

The cross is proudly displayed in homes, by doors or gardens and is visited and admired by the residents and, during the day of the Mayos, by the Corremayos.

OTHER EVENTS

During these festivities there is an important programme for all audiences, among them:

FOLK GROUPS MEETING

On Sunday, Day of the Mayos, the cuadrillas (folk bands) gather and perform traditional songs in streets, squares and corners where the Mayos are displayed.

NACIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

That same Sunday, a folk music performance involving regional and national bands takes place.

ALHAMA IN CONCERT

A few days prior to the day of the Mayos. These days several music concerts are held. Some of the national leading bands annually participate.





OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **Paella contest:** all condiments are provided by the organization.
- **Corremayos Mayos title,** which is awarded to a well-known personality of Alhama.
- **Children's activities:** Corremayos for children, workshops, plays... etc.
- **International Custom Bikers Event.**
- **Cultural activities:** exhibitions, plays...
- **Sports activities:** motocross, trial adventure...
- **Souk Alhama:** flea market where you can find handicrafts and natural products.



LOS MAYOS



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Destino

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