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Navidad

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Navidad

Holiday Customs

Informant:

Annette Vazquez is one of my childhood friends that I grew up with. During high school, we got extremely close. Since then, whenever we get together, we spend hours laughing and talking about the past as well as the present. Annette was born in North Logan, Utah in the summer of 2000. She has 2 younger brothers and one older sister. Both of her parents were born in Mexico, where much of her extended family still resides. Her parents applied for United States citizenship and moved to Utah in the late 1900s. Her family still finds joy in practicing the many cultural and religious traditions that her parents grew up practicing.

Context:

I interviewed Annette at my home in Logan, Utah. We discussed her family's traditions around my kitchen table while Annette ate chips and salsa. She seemed uneasy at first, as she was unsure how to explain her family's traditions and rituals. After explaining that there was no right or wrong way, she calmed down and excitedly spoke about her family's traditions during Navidad.

Text:

Like most families, we celebrate Christmas. [So um...] In some Mexican and Hispanic families, they open their gifts on December 24th. My family takes part in this tradition because in Mexico [uh well...] Christmas isn't called Christmas and isn't on December 25th. You can call it Navidad. [Annette paused for a moment, while she pondered how she was going to explain the significance behind celebrating Navidad]. So, in Mexico we don't have a Santa Clause. Instead, there are three kings who walk down the streets and they have all these exotic zoo animals with them. For example, there's this one guy who rides on an elephant, the other rides on a giraffe, and the other rides on a peacock. These three kings deliver presents on the night of December 23rd. So like, what is Christmas Eve here, it's our Christmas morning. My family has accommodated, where we now open our gifts on the night of the 24th, instead of the morning of that day and definitely not on the morning of December 25th—I was just raised that way. On the 24th my mom wakes up super early to start making food for that night's celebration. Sometimes she'll make tamales and the thing about tamales is that not many people think about...the

process. It literally takes hours, hours, and hours. Other times she'll either make Menudo or Posole, which are meat soups. These recipes also take a long time to make, so much so you have to start preparation the day before. After we finish dinner, we each take turns opening one gift at a time. With three siblings, my mom, and dad, this can take several hours.

Texture: At the beginning of the interview, Annette was hesitant that she wouldn't know the right way to explain her family's Navidad (Christmas) traditions. I quickly replied, stating— "I don't want to hear the right way, I want to hear how you and your family perform this cultural tradition!" After Annette began to settle down, she began going on and on, describing how personal and meaningful this tradition is to her and her family. It seemed like her mom had a lot more responsibility in making sure Navidad happened then the rest of the family. When she mentioned that her mom woke up early to start that night's meal, she didn't mention that anyone helped her with the preparation or process. You could tell by the way Annette spoke about Navidad that she was getting excited for this year's celebration with her family.

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