

# Festivals, Religious Celebrations and other Events on Taboga Island

*Come and enjoy the year with us!*

## **DECEMBER**

Mother's Day in Panama, December 5th.  
Christmas Celebrations: December 25th and before. Christmas carols are piped out of the church steeple during the days up to Christmas, and the town is lovingly decorated. The townspeople turn out for a beautiful midnight mass.



## **December through April**

Brown Pelicans migrating and reproducing. 35,000 or more brown pelicans arrive at the Wildlife Refuge in Taboga-Uraba from North America. It is possible to see courtship and mating in addition to their feeding behavior.

## **JANUARY**

New Year is a big celebration (it turns into several days on Taboga) when the islanders make dummies of public figures. They represent the old year and are filled with fireworks. The islanders read out a will full of critics and promises and then set the dummies on fire. Taboga is home to many tuna fisherman and you can hear tuna bombs (sound like large fireworks) being blown both to ward off evil spirits and celebrate.

## **FEBRUARY**

Carnival Celebrations in Panama originated on Taboga Island. The dates change every year. Carnival begins on a Saturday and ends on Fat Tuesday (day before Ash Wednesday). Carnival takes place 40 days before the Christian Holy Week. The town is divided into two competing groups, Calle Arriba and Abajo which sometimes have competing Carnival Queens. Small parades are held daily in full costume and it is a lively small-town event with marching bands and street discos which are open late into the night. Perfect for those who want to escape the wild Panama City carnival.

## **MARCH**

Easter is a large celebration on Taboga with many religious processions. Holy Thursday and Good Friday are observed with customs centuries old. A life-size effigy of Jesus Christ in a glass casket is marched through the streets by worshipers serving penance. It proceeds through the town with a devil in pursuit trying to steal the Christ. The effigy is protected by townspeople dressed as Roman soldiers who chase away the devil. Easter Sunday services are held in the church, which is beautifully decorated for the celebration.

## **MAY**

San Isidro Labrador was a Spanish day laborer known for his kindness to the poor and animals. He is the Catholic patron saint of farmers and Madrid. Check for dates with the Taboga Church.

## **May or June**

Feast Day of Corpus Christie, a Christian feast in honor of Holy Eucharist. Each year it falls on a different day, for example 2007 was June 7th, 2008 is May 22nd, so check with Taboga Island church to see when they are celebrating it. It is usually celebrated on the Thursday or Sunday after Holy Trinity.

## **JUNE**

Fathers Day (second Sunday in June) on Taboga is celebrated with private parties and street festivities.

St. John the Baptist Day, June 24 (Dia de San Juan Bautista). John the Baptist was a teacher, and widely regarded as a prophet by several religions.

San Pedro Founder's Day Festival, June 29. This lively festival celebrates the first patron saint of Taboga and the namesake for the town itself. Please confirm the dates with the Taboga Church or mayor's office.

## **JULY**

Virgin Del Carmen Festival, July 16. Decorated fishing and pleasure boats follow a lead boat carrying the statue of Virgin Del Carmen and the town priest. They sail in procession around the island and are blessed by the priest.

## **July through February**

Whale Migration. Humpback, Sei and other whales can be spotted in season while on their migration to and from their feeding zones. Panama Bay is one of the northernmost breeding areas for the humpback whale. Each year, beginning about late June, the humpbacks leave Antarctica to migrate northwards to their tropical calving grounds, especially in the Pearl Islands Archipelago and near the Island of Taboga. Fin whales can be spotted during the fall and winter months.

## **NOVEMBER**

Panamanian National Holiday Month, officially celebrated in a minor way on Taboga. There are numerous private parties, a small parade, and yachts arrive to spend the day on Taboga from the mainland.

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**Contact Cerrito Tropical!**

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