

Festivals around the world

- A Festivals are an important part of our lives, wherever we come from. All over the world, people welcome the opportunity to come together and celebrate. These traditions started for a variety of reasons – many have religious origins, while others have more secular ones. However, the vast majority of festivals share one purpose, which is to celebrate! Here is a description of two of the most unusual festivals.
- B The Anastenaria festival is held in villages across Bulgaria and northern Greece. The festival dates back to 1250, when the church of St Constantine caught fire. According to the story, a group of people heard the icons of St Helen and St Constantine crying inside the burning church, so they went into the building and saved them. These people came back out of the church completely unharmed. Today, this act of bravery and religious devotion is remembered on the feast day of St Constantine and St Helen, on 21 May. Participants spend time dancing and meditating before walking barefoot over hot coals while holding religious icons above their heads. The Greek Orthodox Church discourages this practice, but the people who walk over the hot coals believe that their bodies are taken over by the spirit of St Constantine, enabling them to walk over the coals without feeling pain or injuring themselves.
- C The La Tomatina festival takes place in August each year in Buñol, near Valencia. Known as 'the world's biggest food fight', the purpose of the festival is for participants to throw tomatoes at each other, and as many as 50,000 people from all over the world come to experience it. There are strict rules for anyone who wants to join in, which include not throwing hard objects or tearing each other's clothes. People are also advised to wear old trainers, wear swimming goggles to protect their eyes, and not dress up in anything special. La Tomatina first took place in 1944. Nobody knows why the festival began, although some believe that it started when the town people, who were unhappy with their council, threw tomatoes at the town officials. Whatever the reasons, La Tomatina has been repeated every year since then. The festival is great fun for those taking part, but there are also practical benefits to it. As well as finding a use for about 150,000 old tomatoes, the tomatoes' natural acidity may help to clean the buildings in the town. However, the same cannot be said for the festival goers' clothes!

Reading

1 Read the text and mark the sentences *true* or *false*. Provide evidence from the text to justify your answers.

- 1 All festivals have religious origins.
- 2 The people outside the church of St Constantine were crying because the icons were burning.
- 3 La Tomatina attracts thousands of visitors to Buñol every August.
- 4 La Tomatina started because the town officials were unhappy with the people living in Buñol.

2 Answer the questions using your own words.

- 1 What reason do the participants in the Anastenaria festival give for being able to walk over hot coals?
- 2 What should people taking part in La Tomatina remember to do so that everyone enjoys the festival?



Use of English

3 Link the sentences with the bold relative pronouns to make one sentence.

1 There are villages in Bulgaria and Greece. The people hold a festival every May. (**whose**)

2 Anastenaria is a festival. It dates back to 1250. (**which**)

3 La Tomatina attracts a lot of visitors. Some of them come from abroad. (**whom**)

4 La Tomatina started in 1944. People threw tomatoes at the town officials. (**when**)

4 Find synonyms in the text for the following words.

1 with nothing on your feet (*paragraph B*)

2 making possible (*paragraph B*)

3 reason (*paragraph C*)

4 advantages (*paragraph C*)

Writing

5 Describe the positive effects of a festival on a local community. Write 100–150 words.