Holidays of Costa Rica

Instructions: Read the different passages and write the name of the respective holiday that the paragraph represents.

-Independence Day	-Holy Week	-The Virgin of Angels Day

1. _____

It is a major Catholic holiday celebrated all over the world and Costa Rica is no exception. Traditions run deep during this special week, and everyone enjoys their much-anticipated time off work.

If you come to Costa Rica for a family vacation just before Easter, you will witness a week-long celebration consisting of parades, religious processions & mini-festivals during 'Semana Santa'. The processions are held in every city, but the one in San José is the best to see since it usually involves the cast of the National Theater Company and has a big production team featuring various bands and professional musicians.
The actual holiday during this week is celebrated on the Thursday and Friday before Easter Sunday. Most Costa Ricans have at least those two days off, however, schools and many others enjoy taking the entire week off to spend time with their families and friends.

During this festive week, many Ticos head for the beaches to enjoy some sun and relaxation. If they aren't at the beach, they're relaxing at home, making traditional food to share with loved ones. Since many religious followers fast during this week (or at least on Good Friday), they make wonderful homemade tamales and enjoy more seafood than usual.

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2. _____

This celebration takes place on August 2nd, when the whole country celebrates Costa Rica's patron saint, the Virgin of Angels, also known as 'la Negrita' or Black Virgin. The statue of the Black Virgin—believed to be indigenous representation of Virgin Mary—was found in the early 17th Century in Costa Rica's former capital, Cartago.

According to local folklore, the statue kept miraculously reappearing at the same site where it was originally found, so the locals decided to build a shrine on the very same spot, and it has remained there until the present day. The Virgin is displayed on the main altar at the Our Lady of Angels Basilica in Cartago.

Nearly two million Costa Ricans walk the 13.6 miles from San Jose downtown to the Cathedral each year, in order to honor the legend of the Virgin Mary. Prior to the celebration you will see thousands of pilgrims walking from all corners of the country (and sometimes other areas of Central America) to get to Cartago.

3. _____

Costa Rica's Independence Day is celebrated on September 15th. Unlike other countries in the region where armies perform pompous parades, Costa Rica celebrates its declaration of independence from Spain by organizing student parades. School children dress up in the national attire and go out to the main streets with colorful homemade *faroles*—lanterns.

The celebration actually begins on the 14th as everyone awaits the 'freedom torch' that is brought in all the way from Guatemala by various runners (mostly students). This signifies the voice of the independence brought from Guatemala in 1821. Promptly at 6pm people pour out onto the streets, where the entire country sings the national anthem followed by the students' *faroles* parade and fireworks.

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