

“tastoanes”

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## tastoanes

Es una de las tradiciones más importantes de Tonalá, Jalisco, México desde hace cientos de años. En ella se renueva el compromiso de los Tonaltecas por sus costumbres y raíces ancestrales, de la historia de la conquista en el Occidente del país a la nueva identidad cimentada en su aculturación artística, religiosa social y política.

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## **Tastoanes**

The Tastoan people are a part of a tradition that spans more than a century in the municipality of Tonalá, Mexico. Every 25th of July the Tastoan Warriors hold a tradition in Tonalá, Mexico. They are known to have a ritual in the feast day of Santiago (also known as Saint James) in which many of the Tonalá's male residents transform themselves into the legendary Tastoanes to take part in a performance that represents their struggle against the patron saint of Spain.









The Tastoan performance can be traced back to the Spain of centuries past. Their performance comes from the 12th century, when the first performances were commonly interpreted as the representation of the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the 1500's.

The term Tastoan is derived from the Nahuatl word Tlatoani, which means lord or spokesperson. Tastoan is like a type of primitive instinct that is asleep all year, but when the date draws near, it wakes up and starts to prepare for one more battle against Santiago.









The males who participate as Tastoanes in the annual event undergo a transformation of sorts when they dress for the performance. They are in their masks and fixing their wigs... and then they are no longer the same, they have a different spirit and are now Mexican Tastoan Warriors.









The original identities of the Tastoan performers disappear the moment they put on their masks, which are an integral part of the tradition. Originally, the Tastoanes crafted their masks of clay but due to the fragility and heaviness of the clay masks, they were eventually replaced by leather. Other aspects of the mask creation have changed as well. Previously painted with anilines and now painted with acrylics.









The custom of Tastoanes involved the reuse of the mask's base from one year to another. They would throw the masks in a container with water and start to pull off all the parts; the nose, the eyes and so on. It was like killing one Tastoan to give life to another one. Today, it is customary for the performers to craft complete new masks each year.

There are some findings into the creation of the Tastoanes Warrior Masks. It describes the indigenous warriors during a battle in Tonalá. The scribe said that the indigenous people of this region were so fierce in battle that he saw one indigenous warrior who had been wounded by a spear on two occasions and yet continued to fight against a Spanish warrior who was on horseback. He said, "They were so fierce that they appeared to be demons."

