



# EL BORICUA

UN POQUITO DE TODO...

A Cultural Publication for Puerto Ricans



*De tierras lejanas  
venimos a verte  
nos sirve de guía  
la estrella de oriente*

**Feliz Navidad  
y  
Prospero Año Nuevo**

*Javier and Ivonne Figueroa  
and the staff of  
EL BORICUA*



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**DECEMBER 2015**

In Puerto Rico and Spain (where we come from) Christmas trees are common in the home but In Spain they don't appear until the second half of December, unlike in Puerto Rico, now during Thanksgiving.

Also in the home there are intricate, miniature nativity scenes called Belénes (in Spain), and Nacimientos (in Puerto Rico), which depict life in the village where Jesus was born.

The Nacimiento or menger always includes the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph as well as the Three Kings, Baltasar, Melchior and Gaspar, a star to signify the Star of Bethlehem, and some stable animals.

**6th January** – This is the Feast of the Epiphany (Día de los Reyes Magos) when the Three Kings arrived in Bethlehem. For Spanish and Puerto Rican children this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings/Wise Men) have left gifts for them in their house. Santa may leave them a token gift on December 25th but Los Reyes are the favorites.

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## Boricua Calendar

**December 3, 1922** First radio program transmitted in Puerto Rico.

**December 10, 1898** Treaty of Paris signed conceding Puerto Rico to the US.

**December 11, 1846** Manuel Fernández Juncos, poet, journalist and writer is born in Tres Montes - Asturias. Fernandez first lived in Ponce then in Juana Díaz, Adjuntas and Vega Baja. He was a staunch supporter of Puerto Rican interests and wrote on the Puerto Rican culture. Among his accomplishments; presided over the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, founded El Buscapié, wrote and published several books. He died in San Juan in 1928.

**December 24th** Nochebuena

**December 25th** ¡Feliz Navidad!

**December 19th, 1876** Pablo Casals born in Spain. Moved to Puerto Rico the birth place of his mother. He was a world renowned cellist.

**December 28th** Día de los Inocentes - This feast used to be celebrated like a carnival, where men dressed as the "evil soldiers of Herod" went house to house, "kidnapping" the first-born boy from every family. To recover their children, the families offered the soldiers gifts. This tradition continues today in a small town called Hatillo. The town joins in a parade and later participates in a public party at the town square.

**December 31, 1807** First newspaper published in Puerto Rico.

**December 31st** Año Viejo

### The First Christmas Tree in Puerto Rico



It is believed that the very first Christmas tree in Puerto Rico was put up in Bayamón in 1866. Dr. Agustín Stahl, was born in Aguadilla in 1842, of northern European parents. Don Enrique Stahl, his German father, surely spoke to his children of the old German tradition of decorating pines for the Christmas holidays. Dr. Agustín Stahl, settled in Bayamon in 1865, after having finished his medical studies in Europe. And it is in the Stahl's yard that the very first Puerto Rican Christmas Tree is decorated

### Gift Idea . . .

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### El Brindis del Bohemio

The poem  
Is on our website

Octavas and Octavitas are ancient Catholic Church traditions going back centuries, brought to the island by our Spanish ancestors. The celebrations are in honor of Los Reyes Magos.

In Spain the word aguinaldo is used in reference to a gift usually given from godparents to godchild. In Puerto Rico, aguinaldo is a gift, and in the case of a Puerto Rican aguinaldo it is a gift of song. In other countries an Aguinaldo might be a monetary gift given to employees or sometimes to people in need.

[Spanish-English Dictionary](#)  
[On-line](#)

<http://www.freedict.com/onldict/spa.html>

## Origen of Aguinaldos –

### Villancicos

The Puerto Rican aguinaldo originates in the villancico español. The term “villancico” was applied in Spain to define peasant songs, or rustic songs, for particular times of the year. Villanos refers to village folk and villancico refers to Christmas carols.

With colonization villancicos are introduced to our island and immediately a split in musical genre develops. There are villancicos puertorriqueños that refer to traditional Christmas carols – being very religious in nature, with subdued rhythms, and often being traditional Spanish villancicos.

Villancicos remain with sounds associated with traditional European style music such as the waltz. Samples of classic villancicos include “Alegría” and “Villancico Yaucano.”

#### Alegría

“legría, alegría, alegría  
alegría, alegría y placer  
que la Virgen va de paso con su esposo a Belén”

#### Villancico Yaucano

"Quisiera Niño besarte y San José no me deja  
Dice que te haré llorar; ¿verdad que aun así me dejas?  
Ha nacido en un portal llenito de telarañas  
entre la mula y el buey el Redentor de las almas.  
Yo soy un pobre yaucano que vengo de Yauco aquí  
y ami Niño Dios le traigo un gallo quiquiriquí..."

Later **villancicos criollos** develop which have traditional rhythms but incorporate Puerto Rican danza with a “paseo” or introduction that is a characteristic of our danza. A sample of a villancico criollo is “Los Reyes del Oriente” and “Alegres Pascuas.”

#### Los Reyes de Oriente:

"Los Reyes que llegaron a Belén  
anunciaron la llegada del Mesías  
nosotros con alegría  
la anunciamos hoy también.  
De tierra lejana venimos a verte  
nos sirve de guía la Estrella de Oriente  
O brillante Estrella que anuncia la aurora  
no nos falte nunca tu luz bienchora..."

#### Alegres Pascuas:

Por fin llegaron las Navidades  
las fiestas reales de nuestro lar,  
fiestas de todos nuestros anhelos,  
nuestros desvelos y nuestro afán.  
Cuanto me agrada haber nacido  
en este nido, en este edén,  
porque estas fiestas que adoro tanto  
son el encanto de Borinquén...

### Aguinaldos

The classic villancico develops into cantos jíbaros puertorriqueños that are identified as aguinaldos jíbaros which include a variety of “seis” styles.

The aguinaldo further develops into diverse styles or regional variations that are identified by different names. An example of this is the Aguinaldo Cagüeno – the aguinaldo style of early Caguas villagers. Other regional aguinaldo styles include aguinaldo isabelino, aguinaldo orocoveño, and a few other styles referred to under the umbrella term “aguinaldo jíbaro.”

Soon aguinaldos jíbaros diversify once more creating a new genre known as, **aguinaldo criollos**, which incorporate native rhythms and instruments such as el güiro and African rhythms and instruments such as claves. Soon the Puerto Rican cuatro is developed and its sound is incorporated into aguinaldos criollos.

### Canciones Criollas Navideñas

Another evolution of the aguinaldo puertorriqueño are canciones criollas navideñas that infiltrate parrandas or trullas. These are really aguinaldos-guarachas (if guarachas), or aguinaldos-plena (if plenas), or aguinaldos-merenges (if merenges).

Our canciones populares show further development with Feliciano’s world-wide fame for “Feliz Navidad.”

### Aguinaldos de Promesa

Christmas is the time to give and receive, including asking for heavenly intervention in our problems. Promesas de Los Tres Santos Reyes were common. Many of these promises lasted for 33 years (Christ was 33 at his death and resurrection). Aguinaldos become the principle vehicle for these promises. *“If we have a good harvest our family promises to present aguinaldos on la vispera de Reyes.”* Every year the family is obligated to take a parranda to friends and neighbors for a particular period of years. The parranda becomes the gift of music, a duty with answered prayer, a way to show appreciation – llevar or dar un aguinaldo.

These” promesas” or promises of our ancestors are the base of our “tradicion navideña” de ofrecer parrandas.

The jíbaro persona now has a specific function during the Christmas season which is to take or deliver all these diverse sounds in parrandas and trullas throughout the island.

That is why Navidad is the time to wear your pava, play which every instrument you can – and to at least pretend to be a **jíbaro Puertorriqueño**.

**¡Ay, lelolai – lelolai!**

### Arroz con Dulce Coconut Rice Pudding

1½ cups rice  
water for soaking  
1 tsp. salt  
1 cinnamon stick, in 4 pieces  
1 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled & diced  
6 whole cloves  
3 cups of water  
1 can (15.5 oz.) of Cream of Coconut  
1 cup of water  
1/2 cup raisins  
Ground cinnamon for garnish

Cover rice with cold water and soak for 1½ hours. Drain. In saucepan, combine salt, cinnamon stick, ginger, cloves and 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Discard spices, reserve water.

In saucepan, combine cream of coconut, 1 cup of water and water from spices. Bring to a boil. Add drained rice and raisins. Simmer over medium/low heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is soft and most of liquid is absorbed.

Spoon on to a flat serving dish and gently pat down to flatten. Chill. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon just before serving.

*Serves 6-8*

### Flan

1 cup sugar plus ¼ cup water for caramel  
  
2 cans evaporated milk  
1 can condensed milk  
6 whole eggs  
½ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons vanilla  
½ teaspoon salt

First make the caramel. Pour sugar in a 2 cup Pyrex glass measuring cup, add water. Put in microwave for about 4 minutes or so until sugar is melted and caramel is the right color. It might take less than 4 minutes or more, depending on your microwave. Slowly pour into the flan pan and then swirl around the bottom. Set aside.

Blend all ingredients in a blender for a few minutes. Carefully pour into caramelized pan. Set in a 350° oven in a “baño de María” (bien Marie). Cook for about 45 minutes – covered with foil.

Test for doneness as you would a cake.

When the custard cools, lay a plate on top of the mold then carefully flip it over. Refrigerate and serve cold.

### Sangria Criolla

1-1/2 cups frozen passion fruit pulp, thawed  
2 cups pineapple juice  
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice  
2 cups red wine, inexpensive will do  
2 cups lemon-lime soda  
1 cup white rum  
1 6-ounce can mandarin oranges  
1 large jar Maraschino Cherries  
ice cubes

Combine all of the ingredients in a pitcher. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving. Preferably make a day ahead.

### Coquito

28 ounces coconut milk  
2 cups Bacardi rum  
14 ounces condensed milk  
4 egg yolks  
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix all ingredients in the blender and blend well. Pour into a glass bottle and refrigerate. Make ahead for richer flavor. Serve cold in small glasses.

### Alcapurrias

1-3/4 pounds yautia (taro root)  
3 pounds green bananas  
2 teaspoons salt  
3 tablespoons annatto oil  
1 recipe Picadillo - cooked  
2 cups corn oil for frying

Picadillo – ground beef or/and pork seasoned with sofrito, olives and capers.

Peel the yautia, and the green banana and run through food processor. Combine the grated vegetables with the salt and annatto oil in a large bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. This makes for easier handling.

Spread about 1/4 cup of the dough on your left hand. Place 1 tablespoon of picadillo on top. Carefully fold over the dough so the filling is completely covered. Smooth the fritter out with the back of a spoon. It is best to make them one at a time as you are frying. Carefully lay the alcapurria on a large spatula and lower into the hot oil. Fry over medium high heat until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.



**La Parranda del Sopón**

**Coro**

*A las dos de la mañana nos comimos un sopón, y se nos pegó un dolor alla por la madrugada.*

*A las dos de la mañana nos comimos un sopón, y se nos pegó un dolor alla por la madrugada.*

*Cogieron una gallina, le torcieron el pescuezo, le partieron to' los huesos le cortaron la pollina.*

*Todo el mundo en la cocina comentaba el gran suceso no quedaría ni un heso de quella pobre gallina.*

-coro-

Con aquella algarabía que en la fiesta se formó

El gallo se despertó.

No creyó lo que veía.

Brincó, hizo lo que pudo - se encrespó toa la cresta - pero al terminar la fiesta el gallo era gallo viudo.

-coro-

Se comieron el sopón con gusto y much alegría, y al rato se retorcián al sentir un gran dolor. La gente de aquel sopón comentaban y decían eso fue una maldición que el gallo nos echaría.

-coro-

Allá por la madrugada aquel gallo se reía - allá por la madrugada aquel gallo se reía - allá por la madrugada aquel gallo se reía - allá por la madrugada aquel gallo se rió.



**Brisas de Navidad**

Ya se oye el murmullo De una brisa suave. Son los aires frescos De las Navidades.

Estamos contentos Llegó el momento de parrandear. Son los aires frescos, Los aires frescos de Navidad.

Una vez al año Podemos gozar Y olvidar las penas En la Navidad

Cuando el gallo canta, Dice en su canción Que ha venido al mundo Nuestro Redentor.

Una vez al año Podemos gozar Y olvidar las penas En la Navidad.



**Saludos, Saludos**

**Coro**

Saludos, saludos vengo a saludar saludos, saludos vengo a saludar a lo isabelino bonito cantar a lo isabelino bonito cantar

Alegres venimos para saludar; alegres venimos para saludar a las amistades de este santo hogar a las amistades de este santo hogar

**Coro**

Saludos a todos queremos brindar, Saludos a todos, queremos brindar, con nuestra presencia un bello cantar con nuestra presenciay un bello cantar.

**Coro**

**Hermoso Bouquet**

**Coro**

*Hermoso Bouquet a ti te traemos bellísimas flores del jardín riquenho Hermoso Bouquet a ti te traemos bellísimas flores del jardín riquenho*

De todas las flores yo te traigo un ramo recíbelo bien que éste es tu aguinaldo

**Coro**

Traigo lirios blancos también azucenas las ramas de noche flor de yerba buena

**Coro**

Entra tantas flores hoy nos despedimos como se despiden el nardo y el lirio

**Coro**

**Venid Pastores**

**Coro**

Venid, pastores, venid; oh venid a Belén, oh venid al portal; yo no me voy de Belén sin el Niño Jesús un momento adorar. Venid, pastores, venid; oh venid a Belén, oh venid al portal; yo no me voy de Belén sin el Niño Jesús un momento adorar.

Y la estrella de Belén, nos guiará con su luz, hasta el humilde portal donde nació Jesús.

**coro**

## Christmas in Puerto Rico

By: Luis R. Claudio in Dallas



Remembering.....

My recollection of Christmas in Puerto Rico takes place in the sixties. The time was around 1965 and 1966. For me, it was a time of innocence, of discovery and of seeing the world through rose-colored glasses. My biggest worry was whether Carmen Merengue (my high school sweetheart) really liked me or not. Urb. Luchetti, in Manatí was my home. This is where this story takes place.

Christmas in Puerto Rico is a time of festivities and fun. During the Christmas season, we participated in 'parrandas' or "aguinaldos" in which a group of family, friends and neighbors went from house to house sing Christmas carols and having fun. We were usually invited in for food and adult beverages and perhaps ending the evening with a succulent bowl of shrimp soup (asopao de camarones) or a plate of arroz con gandules and Lechón.

My house was always the meeting place for the "Trulla". A 'trulla' is the name given to the group of people about to participate in Christmas Caroling or a "Parranda". My mother would prepare the "asopao" and Coquito (Coconut milk drink spiced with Rum and cinnamon). The meal was designed to prepare us for the all night singing and partying that was about to take place.

The evening starts with Parrandas or caroling as we travel through the neighborhood singing and playing our instruments, stopping at each friend's houses long enough to sing a song or two. We sang décimas or improvised Christmas songs. We expected to be fed and a drink or two offered for our trouble. Once fed, we moved on to the next house. At some point late in the evening, we would all agree to end the night at a particular person's house and the group would proceed to that house totally uninvited. It was this festive intrusion that formed the essence of an "Asalto Navideño".

When we arrived at the house designated for the "Asalto" we sang a series of improvised décimas and seis or the music of the jíbaro.

*Alegre vengo de la montaña  
de mi cabaña que alegre está  
y a mis amigos les traigo flores  
de las mejores de mi rosál.  
Y a mis amigos les traigo flores  
de las mejores de mi rosál.*

In its repertoire of décimas and seis, the music of the Jíbaro of Puerto Rico clearly shows its Andalusia origins. All the songs sung are improvised couplets of ten syllables each, called décimas. This style of song and music link the Puerto Rican tradition to 16th Century Spanish poetic practice. Two of the most frequently encountered forms of this style of music are the 'aguinaldo' or décima and the 'seis'.

These traditions I remember well, but the one I cherish the most is the food that is prepared at Christmas time. Pasteles, arroz con gandules, lechon a la barita, gandinga de cerdo, cuchifritos, morcillas, guineitos verdes, tembleque, arroz con dulce, turrone. We then added the instruments that were needed for the Parranda.... we played cuatro, güiros with rasper, pandaretas or tambourines, maracas, cencerros (cow bell), bongos and congas and a guitar or two. That was my Christmas in Manatí.



**La Luz**

**Coro**

*Yo tenía una luz  
Que a mí me alumbraba  
Y venía la brisa . . . (fuá)  
Y me la apagaba.*

Como algo invisible  
Venía y la soplab  
Yo tenía una luz  
Que a mí me alumbraba  
Y venía la brisa . . . (fuá)  
Y me la apagaba.  
**-Coro-**

Cerraba mi ojos  
Y a Dios suplicaba  
Yo tenía una luz  
Que a mí me alumbraba  
Y venía la brisa . . . (fuá)  
Y me la apagaba.  
**-Coro-**

Después no prendía  
Aunque yo tratara  
Yo tenía una luz  
Que a mí me alumbraba  
Y venía la brisa . . . (fuá)  
Y me la apagaba.  
**-Coro-**

**La Manía**

**Coro**

*Oiga mi compay  
Deje ésa manía  
Baile con la suyo  
Yo bailo con la mía  
Oiga mi compay  
Deje ésa manía  
Baile con la suyo  
Yo bailo con la mía*

El año pasao  
Me agrió usted la vida  
No quería bailar, caramba  
Sólo con la mía.  
**-coro-**

Yo no sé compay  
Cual es su manía  
Si es que son los palos, caramba  
O es la mujer mía.  
**-coro-**

**Llegó la Navidad**

**Coro**

*Llegó, llegó, llegó la Navidad  
Llegó, llegó, llegó la Navidad  
Felicitaciones mil  
pa' los de aquí y los de allá.  
Felicitaciones mil  
pa' los de aquí y los de allá.*

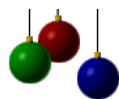
Aquí no quiero tristezas  
Vamos todos a cantar.  
Aquí no quiero tristezas  
Vamos todos a cantar.  
**-coro-**

Aquí es que empieza la fiesta  
Porque llegó navidad.  
Aquí s que empieza la fiesta  
Porque llegó navidad.  
**-coro-**



**La Trullita**

Esta es la trullita, ésta es la trullita  
Que yo te decia.  
Salimos de noche y llegamos de día  
Salimos de noche y llegamos de día.  
Se oye el murmullo, se oye el murmullo  
De una brisa suave  
Y es que ya están cerca ya las navidades Y  
es que ya están cerca ya las navidades



**A La Zarandela**

Abreme la puerta, ábreme la puerta  
Que estoy en la calle,  
Y dirá la gente, que ésto es un desaire.

A la zarandela, a la zarandela  
A la zarandela de mi corazón  
A la zarandela chiquita, a la zarandela  
A la zarandela de mi corazón.

Allá dentro veo, allá dentro veo  
Un bulto rapao  
No sé si será, un lechón asao.  
No sé si será, un lechón asao.

**Las Navidades**

Por fin llegaron la Navidades  
Las fiestas reales  
De nuestro hogar  
Fiestas de todos  
Nuestros anhelos  
Nuestros desvelos  
Y nuestro afán.

Soltar queremos nuestra tarea  
Pasando un rato de diversión  
Que son las pascuas  
Mis simpatías  
Y la alegría del corazón

Cuánto me alegro  
De haber nacido  
En este nido, en este edén  
Porque estas fiestas que adoro tanto  
Son el encanto de Borinquen.

Con tamboriles, güiro y maracas  
Mi serenata alegre está.  
Deseo a todos por despedida  
Años de vida y felicidad.

**Los Tres Santos Reyes**

**Coro**

*Los Tres Santos Reyes, los tres y los tres  
Los Tres Santos Reyes, los tres y los tres  
Los saludaremos con divina fe,  
Los saludaremos con divina fe.*

Los Tres Santos Reyes – yo los se  
contar,

Los Tres Santos Reyes – yo los se  
contar.

Gaspar y Melchor y el Rey Baltazar,  
Gaspar y Melchor y el Rey Baltazar.

**Coro**

Llegan con cautela, la estrella los guía,  
Llegan con cautela, la estrella los guía.  
Se sienten sus pasos en la noche fría.  
Se sienten sus pasos en la noche fría.

**Coro**

Señores adiós . . . doy la despedida  
Señores adiós . . . doy la despedida  
Al corazón santo dulce de María.  
Al corazón santo dulce de María.  
Señores adiós porque ya nos vamos  
Todos los presentes pasen feliz año  
Todos los presentes pasen feliz año



### A Traditional Puerto Rican Christmas Menu

Pernil  
Arroz con Gandules  
Pasteles  
Guineitos Cocidos



### Pasteles



Visit our website to find the perfect step-by-step pasteles recipe – plus hints.

### Pernil Al Horno

5 lbs. pork shoulder (picnic cut) don't cut off fat  
6 garlic cloves (or 6 tsp. crushed garlic) or use powder  
½ teaspoon black pepper  
1 teaspoon oregano  
1½ tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon salt -- for every pound of meat

Wash the meat and dry (do not cut off fat).

Mix garlic, black pepper, oregano, olive oil and salt in a small bowl.

Make very deep slits all over the meat and season the making sure that seasoning goes into all the slits.  
Refrigerate the shoulder for 24 hours.

Place the meat in a deep pan with the fat side up. There will be a lot of grease so be sure to use a deep pan. The fat side up will make nice crunchy "cueritos" if you don't cover with foil.

Cook in a pre-heated, 350° oven for about 2½ hours or until well cooked. The meat should be very tender.

### Arroz Con Gandules

2 cups long or short grain rice (rinsed)  
4 cups of water  
¼ cup sofrito  
16 ounce can of gandules (pigeon peas)  
2 tablespoons of alcaparrado (olives and capers)  
1 can tomato sauce  
3 tablespoons of oil  
Salt to taste

Saute the sofrito in the oil for a couple of minutes. Add alcaparrado and cook a couple of minutes. Add the gandules, tomato sauce, and water and boil. Add the rice and make sure there is enough liquid to cover the rice about 1½" above rice line. Salt to taste.

Cook over medium-high heat until the rice is dry. Once the water has been absorbed, stir gently from bottom to top, cover and turn the heat down to low. Stirring once in between cook for 35 minutes or until the rice is tender.

Cook it a bit longer to get pegao. If you stir the rice too much or put too much water in the pot – it will become amogollao – ugh!

### Guineítos verdes cocidos

Buy very green bananas from a local wholesale produce vendor and tell them you want them to keep the bananas green so they won't use their quick ripen procedures.

Cut off ends, make a slit from top to bottom only as deep as the skin.

Boil the bananas in salted water without peeling.

Cook for about 20 minutes or so - the center has to be a bit firm - not too soft. When done the peel will just slide off. After removing the peel pour olive oil over the bananas.

### Guineitos Verdes en Escabeche

4 pounds unripe (green) bananas, unpeeled, cooked for 20 minutes in 2 cups of milk plus 2 quarts of water

2/3 cup white vinegar  
1-2/3 cups olive oil  
1 tablespoon salt  
1/2 tablespoon black pepper  
1 cup alcaparrado  
4 bay leaves

Peel the bananas and cut them into ½-inch-thick slices. Combine the remaining ingredients in a nonreactive bowl. Add the bananas and toss well. Marinate for at least 1 hour before serving. Even better, marinate overnight, covered, refrigerated.

### From Myrna Díaz in New Jersey.

I'll never forget my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in December of 1940 in Mayagüez. Papi hired a neighborhood boy, who played guitar pretty well and loved to sing, to serenade me on my birthday – during my party. The young man was to bring his friends and play guitar and maracas while Papi and his brothers, my uncles, sang. After the serenata Papi invited the boys to stay and enjoy the party. I ended up dancing with the young man a couple of times. Later I learned that the next day he went off to war.

Five years later, on my birthday again, (no party this time), we heard singing outside our house. It was that same young man again. The rest of that Christmas he returned whenever he could to serenade me or to bring our family a parranda. The following year in March of 1946, we were married. Again he sang to me at our wedding and all our lives he sang to me at every turn.

This year is my turn. I will hire musicians, bring in friends, and celebrate with the biggest parranda New Jersey has ever seen.

We'll have music, singing, dancing, food, and lots of tears. All our family including our 8 children, 24 grandchildren, and even a handful of great grandchildren, will be present to honor him at his resting place. He will smile at us from heaven.

I will always love you Papi!



How to roast a perfect pig

<http://www.elboricua.com/lechón.html>

### From Candy (Santos) and Tommy Martinez in Orlando

Our family, and my three brothers and their families, have begun to make photo albums – one for each of our children that they will take with them when they leave “home.” The Navidad photo albums include pictures of our family in parrandas, photos of our children playing instruments, and also include handwritten aguinaldos – so they will know the words. A friend of our family has even written down some of the “music” and that’s in the albums too. We have recorded ourselves on tape and now transferred that to CDs. We also have taken home movies. Hopefully our traditions will go on for generations.

### From Lisa Rodriguez in Alabama

My parents met while at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras. They married right after college in the early 60's and moved to New York and later to Alabama.

Our parents have been part time musicians all their lives. They taught us how to play guitar, maracas, and güiros from the time we could stand up and walk. They took old fashioned “home movies” of our bunch practicing for parrandas and singing aguinaldos. Now they take “home movies” of grandchildren doing the same thing.

One of the most interesting traditions in our family is on the day after Thanksgiving, we decorate the outside of the house with a bunch of lights. Then we eat a late lunch of left over Turkey and then we do our most favorite thing. We sit and watch our parranda home movies.

### From José Martín

When I was a child in the Coamo area back around 1925, my next door neighbors were the only ones with a guitar. When we decided to go parrandeando we traveled on horseback and went with the one guitar player and an assortment of güiros y tambores and some maracas. Most of us only had our voices. We had to carry linternas to light the path. We could get close to the old houses that were on stilts and we would sing right under the bedroom windows. When we saw the light from the candle inside – we moved our horses to the front of the house and tied them up. Then we continued to sing by the front door. We often carried our own drinks and snacks. The stay in each house was very short compared to later on. We visited about 10 houses each time. At the last house was always good with a sopón. Sometimes we brought our own hen.