

### What is the San Joaquin Fiesta?

*La Fiesta de San Joaquin* is an annual celebration held in August in San Joaquin Village, Corozal District. San Joaquin, the village's patron saint, is honoured with *novenas* and a mass at the San Joaquin Catholic Church. The fiesta culminates with a *feria* at the San Joaquin Park. Prior to the celebration being held in the village, and because of their historical connection, many persons from San Joaquin traveled to Bacalar, Mexico for the fiesta. Under the stewardship of Mrs. Maria Angelita Magaña and community members, the village held its first fiesta in August 1967.



### San Joaquin Village

According to oral history, San Joaquin Village was founded in the mid-1850s by the Magaña family who fled from *La Guerra de Castas* - the Caste War - in Yucatan, Mexico. Mr. Andres Magaña along with his wife Felipa Garcia de Magaña, and their son Vicente, travelled from Bacalar and eventually settled in present-day San Joaquin Village. Their safe journey is attributed to the intercession of San Joaquin, the *santo patron* of Bacalar. The village was baptized as 'San Joaquin' in 1904.

### Who is San Joaquin?



According to Christian religious teachings, San Joaquin was the father of Mary, mother of Jesus. He was a pious and generous man who gave regularly to the poor.

His feast day is observed on August 16 in San Joaquin Village. It is a time when devotees ask for San Joaquin's intercession and others show their gratitude for the countless favours and blessings received.



### La corrida de la Antorcha

On August 8, a group of young people travel to the church at Bacalar and gather for a solemn ritual and the lighting of a torch. On their return, the *antorcha* is received at Paraiso Village, Corozal. The group then runs a marathon to San Joaquin with the torch and light the first *veladoras* (candles) which begin the *novena*.

### Novena and Mass

The *novena* is nine days of prayers beginning on August 8 and ending with a Mass on August 16. During these days, many residents and visitors make a pilgrimage to the church at San Joaquin.

### La Feria

*La Feria* takes place on the weekend closest to August 16. A young lady is crowned *Señorita de la Feria*. The festivities include cultural presentations such as the *mestizada* and other choreographed dances, live music, a fireworks display, games and mechanical rides. Booths offer traditional dishes like *chilmole*, *escabeche*, *pibil* as well as other foods.