

Beat: Travel

The happiness overflows in Pamplona at the start of Sanfermines 2023

100 years of the visit by Hemingway

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USPA NEWS - Pamplona is “an elegant city, the best land I have ever seen,” said Ernest Hemingway on 1923 after discover the Sanfermines. This Thursday, July 6, marks the hundredth anniversary of his first visit to Pamplona. The city began its San Fermin festivities at noon, the most anticipated and most famous of all those celebrated in Spain. The Sanfermines 2023 began with the firing of the rocket, the Chupinazo, in front of a Town Hall square full of people ready to enjoy it.

The Sanfermines always start on July 6. In this day, a century ago, Ernest Hemingway discovered Pamplona for the first time. The Navarra capital was for him a city where Hemingway would find himself and the writer within. He enjoyed the San Fermín festivities on nine occasions, always accompanied by his wife, by Juanito Quintana and surrounded friends.

The Sanfermines have changed a bit since then. With the Chupinazo, the happiness overflows in Pamplona. The inhabitants and visitors, many of them Americans, embrace each other to enjoy the festivities. This Friday the first Encierro will be run, but since midday on July 6 the streets of the Navarra capital are filled with people dressed in white and red, eager to eat, drink, dance and laugh.

But the San Fermín festivities cannot avoid being contaminated with politics or social problems. This year, the person charge of shooting the Chupinazo was a representative of the Osasuna club, from the Spanish Soccer League. Immersed in controversy because the club has been excluded from European competitions for having bought matches almost a decade ago. An exclusion considered unfair not only by the leaders of the club and its supporters, but also by the Spanish sports managers. The reason, that at the time the club was not punished and it was punished when its current leaders were the ones who denounced the irregularity. “Osasuna does not give up,” the club representative exclaimed moments after firing the Chupinazo.

The Osasuna's spirit is engraved in the DNA of the people of Pamplona, but the devotion to San Fermín and the desire to festivities are even greater. Pamplona offers its festivities to the whole world, which responds by sending large numbers of visitors to the city. As it was a hundred years ago Ernest Hemingway. The American writer, author of 'Fiesta', the novel about the Sanfermines, whose first publication will be a century old next year, arrived in the city on July 6, learned about the San Fermín festivities and fell in love with Pamplona. Today, his image adorns many corners of the city and his spirit hovers over the streets where today, as a hundred years ago, Pamplona residents and visitors share joy and love for bullfighting.

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