

In Brazil, we have a really popular festival or celebration which is called Carnival. Carnival happens in the week before the Wednesday Ashes, we call Wednesday Ashe, which is all of this is related to the religion, the Catholic religion, which is the largest religion in Brazil.

Carnival was brought by the Portuguese during the 16th, 17th century. Of course, it was really small scale. People would do it more indoors. It was more a private party.

By the time, it just tried to increase, the people started to join it, and celebrate it. It actually started enlarge in terms of people and organizations. Now Carnival, not the party itself but the celebration itself, last 10 days in Brazil.

For the first days, which we say that the beginning of the celebration, we have what is called Blocos, which means block. That's because in Brazil we call the streets as a block.

What this means? It means that with huge electric cars, there will be, for example, singers at the top of it singing for everyone. This car will be going down the streets really slow, and the crowd just follow it the whole day.

During those celebrations, people are free to do whatever they want. They go with their friends, they choose costumes, and they go with that. And that's because Carnival is before what we call before the Lent, where people don't eat meat, they follow what is received in their religion.

Before that, people just try to enjoy what they call the [inaudible] life. During this celebration, we have a really popular dance called samba, which was brought by the Africans and it just incorporated into the celebration.

During those blocks, it happens in basically all the cities around Brazil. And people are just free to join. There is no ticket, no entrance. So people just follow those cars down the streets.

The most famous cities for those blocks are called Salvador, which is in the North part, and we have Rio de Janeiro, which is more on the South part of Brazil. In the last three days of Carnival, we have a more holiday spirit. So people are not going to work. They go to either join those parties or either stay at home.

What happens in the last three days is that we have competition between samba schools. Which is each school is formed by thousands of people, and they have been preparing for this competition the whole year.

They choose a team. Each of those school they are independent. They are free to choose a team. Basically, they use this competition as an opportunity to express political views, maybe a message to give to the whole society, usually are powerful messages that they want to deliver through those presentations.

They choose a team, usually they construct themselves. They make themselves the costume for every single individual, and they go to a place called Sambadrome, which is a stadium made exactly for this purpose, for those big cars, big demonstrations to pass and show their work. They have these three days demonstration or presentation of many Samba schools.

At the end of the third day, there is what they call The Punctuation Day, which they give scores for each of them and they announce the winner. Every single year we have a different winner of course. Usually, people that like Carnival, they treat those schools as a soccer team, so they are actually really fan of their own Samba school. That's the whole summer of Carnival in Brazil.

Yes, because we are really a mixed culture. We had first the Portuguese that colonized, and after they brought the Africans race which actually mixed into the culture. That's a mixture of the cultures that we have.