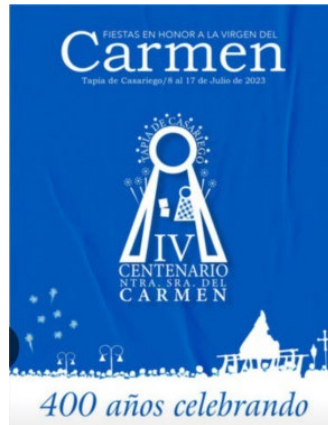


## CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

### Festival of the Virgin of Carmen in Tapia de Casariego (Asturias)

Every year, on 16th July, Tapia de Casariego celebrates the feast in honour of the Virgen del Carmen, the patron saint of sailors.

The residents of the village together with all of us who spend a large part of the summer there, take part in this traditional festival, which in 2023 celebrated its 400th anniversary.



**Day 15 (eve of the Festival)** - From mid-afternoon until early morning of the 16th, carpets with sailors' and floral motifs are prepared in the streets where the procession of the Virgin will pass. These works of ephemeral art are made with salt, flowers, seeds and other natural materials.





**Day 16 (the big day)** - From early in the morning we can go for a stroll to see and photograph the carpeted streets and the boats moored at the quay, which are adorned with multicoloured flags.





**Shortly after midday**, the statue of the Virgin leaves the church carried on the shoulders of a group of sailors and heads towards the sea. The procession, in which hundreds of people take part, goes through the streets of the town following the path of the floral carpets.



**Upon arrival at the quay**, the procession stops. Thousands of people wait there for the arrival of the Virgin and one of the most emotional moments of the day takes place when we all sing the "Salve Marinera".



The Virgin then stands facing the sea to greet the boats that fish in the fishing grounds of Gran Sol and they respond to the greeting with the thunderous sound of their sirens.





After greeting the boats, the Virgin goes to meet the coastal fishermen. There, a prayer is said for all the sailors who have died at sea and the "danza prima" is danced, a dance exclusive to Asturias, which has some similarities with the dances of Brittany in France.



Finally, the Virgin returns to the parish church where she will remain for another year.

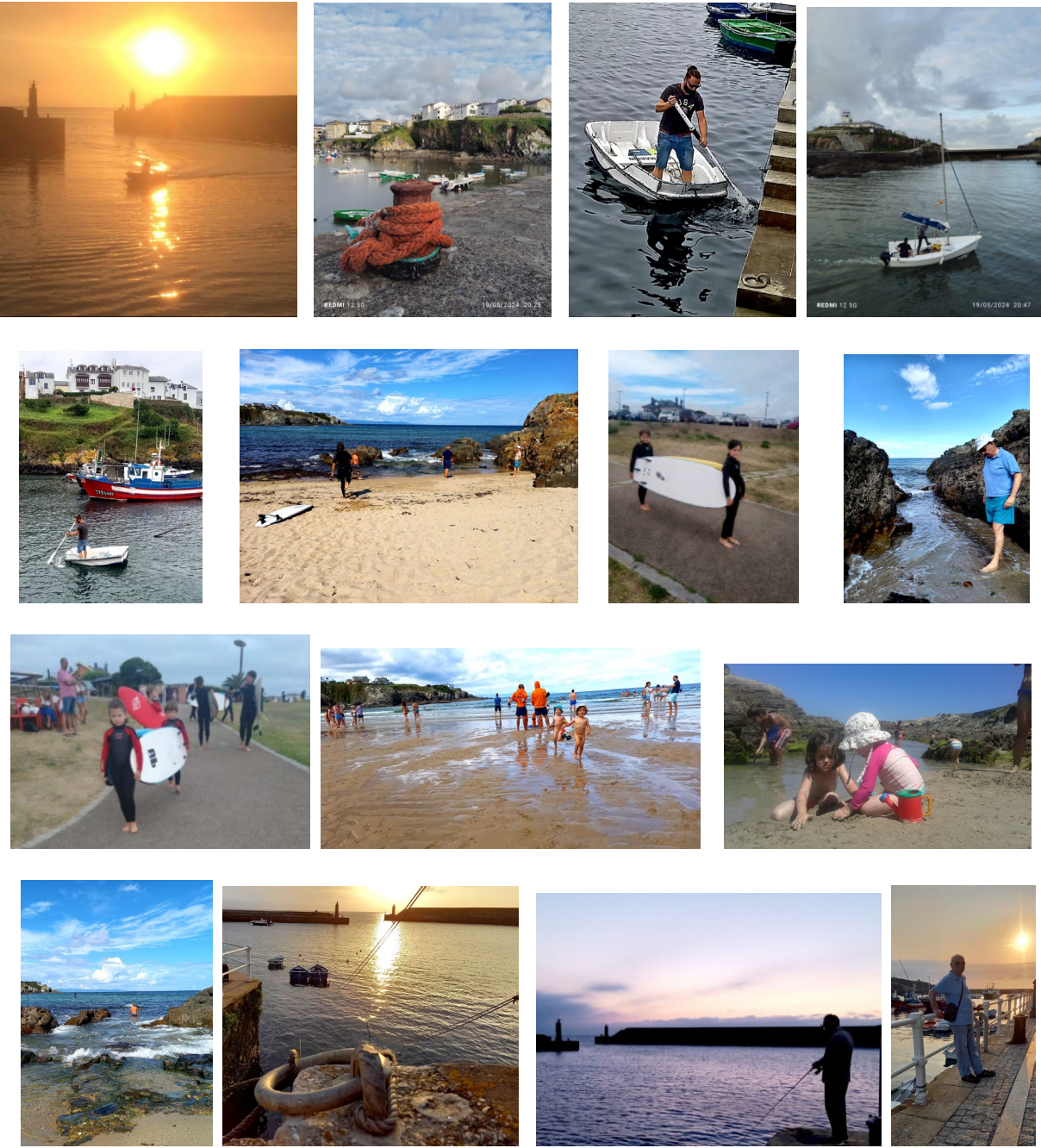


The festival ends with a social meal in which Asturian cider is a must.





**Day 17 (the day after)** - From this day on, Tapia returns to its normal calm and to its usual summer activities.



*María Blanca Bueres Santa Eulalia  
Association of Valencia  
Spain*