



# The Quinceañera Tradition

**A Quinceañera is the Hispanic tradition of celebrating a young girl's coming of age - her 15th birthday.**

The Quinceañera tradition celebrates the young girl (la Quinceañera), and recognizes her journey from childhood to maturity. The customs highlight religion, family, friends, music, food, and dance.

Interestingly, many families today are merging their Hispanic and American heritages by choosing to celebrate a Sweet Sixteen. For their Sweet 16 party, the families do the full-blown quinceañera traditions including the religious ceremony, the reception, the tiara with the number 16, and more.



In the Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American traditions, the custom can be referred to as a Quince (XV) Años, a quinces, a Quinceañera, a Quinceañero or a Fiesta Rosa.

The Quinceañera celebration traditionally begins with a religious ceremony then later, a reception is held in the home or a banquet hall. The festivities include food and music, and in most, a choreographed waltz or dance performed by the Quinceañera and her Court.

It is traditional for the Quinceañera to choose special friends to participate in what is called the Court of Honor. Usually, these young people are her closest friends, her brothers, sisters, cousins - the special people in her life with whom she wants to share the spotlight. The Quinceañera's Court of Honor can be comprised of all young girls (called Dama), all young men (called Chambelán or Escorte or Galán) or a combination of both.

The Quinceañera traditionally wears a ball gown, with her Court dressed in gowns and tuxedos. Guests usually receive small tokens, cápias and cerámicas, to commemorate the celebration.

It is customary for the Quinceañera to receive some or all of the following items for her ceremony.

- Tiara
- Cross or medal
- Bible or prayer book and rosary
- Scepter

Other accessories for this special occasion might be:

- Flower Bouquet
- Cake Decoration
- Cake server set



- Champagne glasses
- The last doll
- Guest book
- Photo album
- Invitations/reception cards

There are many traditions throughout the quinceanera celebration. One of the most popular is the Changing of the Shoes. The father or favored male relative ceremoniously changes the young girl's flat shoes to high heels. This is a beautiful symbol of the Quinceañera's transformation from a little girl to a young lady.

At the reception, there is always the toast to the Quinceanera, known as the brindis. With decorated [Champagne Glasses](#), the guests are invited to offer their congratulations and best wishes.

The [Last Doll](#) is used as part of the ceremony or as decoration and keepsake. The Quinceanera doll represents the last things of a child now that the Quinceanera will focus on the things of a young lady. In some Hispanic cultures, the cápias (printed ribbons with the Quinceañera's name and date) are pinned to the doll, and the Quinceanera circulates among her guests, thanking them for their presence and presenting them with a cápia memento taken from the doll. In another custom, to symbolize leaving childhood things behind, the Quinceanera passes on her Last Doll to a younger sibling.

### The Traditional Ceremony Gifts

[The Traditional Ceremony Gifts](#) have special meaning for the Quinceanera celebration, and their honored significance relates to the Quinceanera's coming of age. The Traditional Ceremony Gifts are special signs of loyalty and commitment to family and the community. These items may include:

#### TIARA

Denotes a "princess" - a triumph over childhood and ability to face the challenges ahead. It is traditional for the headpiece worn by the Quinceanera to be ceremoniously replaced with the TIARA. The "Crowning" is done either by her parents or the godparents presenting the gift.

#### MEDAL

Signifies faith - in herself, and in her world.

#### SCEPTER

Symbolizes authority, and more importantly, responsibility for her life, that is now being given to the young woman. In some Hispanic cultures, the gifts are given to the Quinceanera by "padrinos" (also called godparents or sponsors) specially chosen by the family. The padrinos who give the Traditional Ceremony Gifts are formally recognized, and often are part of the activities.

Source: <http://www.quinceanera-boutique.com/quinceaneratradiation.htm>