



Rituals at Birth, Wedding, Funeral

Birth / Baptism



In the village of Cuba (Baixo Alentejo) it was tradition for godparents, on the baptism celebration, to offer to the person who was being baptized, a plate with “*trouxas-de-ovos*”(a sweet dish with soft sweet egg yolks) and another with gila jam (a kind of pumpkin) and *egg strings* (*strings of sweet eggs yolks*), being this a formal offer on these occasions”.

Children who were not baptized could not enter the cemetery because it was said that their souls were open and that a spirit could enter them.

Birth / Baptism



- The godparents swear an oath before everyone at the altar that in the absence of the parents, they will take care of the child as if he/she were theirs.
- Children, after birth, usually inherited the names of godparents or godmothers, or the names were chosen by godparents.

Birth / Baptism

- The parents dressed their children as saints and angels, to whom they had made a promise for some reason: illness, thanksgiving, birth...
- Baptism dresses were inherited from parents to children.



Weddings



The bride and groom who marry in a church, make a preparation with their parents and godparents about what marriage implies.

The godmother pays for the bride's dress, the godfather pays for the groom's suit and the godparents pay for the wedding rings.

The bride has to wear an old garment, a new garment, a borrowed garment and a blue garment. (something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue).

Weddings

The bride must dress up in white if it's her first church wedding. If the bride has already had another wedding, she cannot dress up in white.

The bride's guests will be at the bride's house and the groom's guests will be at the groom's house before the wedding celebration.

The bride used to walk to church followed by her guests.

The bride is the last to walk up the aisle in the church, by her father, with an orange blossom branch symbolizing her purity.



Weddings



- In the church, the bride stands on the left side and the groom on the right side, in front of the altar.
- After the wedding is celebrated, the wedding rings are exchanged.
- All the guests leave the church after the wedding celebration and the last ones are the bride and groom. The guests join at the exit of the church forming a corridor, the bride and groom cross it and their guests throw rice, wheat, coins and orange blossom at them.

Weddings

- The bride and groom take pictures at the altar and, as they leave the church, they take a group photo with all the guests.
- The wedding banquet was made with packed tables with the guests seated opposite each other, and the bride and groom at a top table, in front of the guests' tables.
- In the past, the wedding party lasted three days.



Weddings



It's tradition to steal the bride and groom from the cake. The image on top of the cake, which symbolizes the bride and groom, is stolen, without them knowing it. A year after the wedding, this image is returned by the person who stole it, eventually appearing at the bride and groom's house; then they offer the person a dinner. It's tradition for the bride and groom to freeze a slice of cake to eat on the day of their 1st wedding anniversary.

Weddings

When they enter the house for the first time, already married, the groom takes the bride in his arms and enters the house on the right foot for luck.

The bed of the bride and groom's house where they will spend the first night after the wedding was prepared with white sheets and is made by a married woman and a single woman.

A week before the wedding, the bride and groom's family would normally gather in a place where there was a wood-fired oven and, there, they would bake the cakes for the wedding.

Some Typical wedding cakes

almond and pumpkin cake



white sweet bread called "popias"



puff pastries



Some Typical wedding meals

light brown rice



Cabidela
(chicken with a little blood)



roasted lamb heads



Funeral

Bathing the dead is a tradition so that he / she is clean as he / she came into the world. It was tradition to wash the dead body with a kind of gauntlets, gel and oil, as children are washed after birth.

If the dead person had a contagious disease, he / she was buried naked.

It was tradition to shave male deceased people.



Funeral



Relatives spend the night accompanying the deceased. This one has to be at rest for 24 hours before being buried.

The deceased's closest children and family members were the ones who carried the body.

During morning, the deceased person's house was not whitewashed. (in Alentejo it is usual to paint the houses with whitewash – cal – to make the houses' exteriors cleaner and to keep the houses cooler)

Funeral

The widows mourned for two years, including the clothing: long black skirt, black blouse and black headscarf. After two years, the widow eased her grief.

Through the tolling of the bell, people knew whether the deceased was male or female.

It's said that when you come back from the cemetery, you should wash your hands and wipe your feet on the carpet.

