

Beat: Travel

Sanfermines of Pamplona suspended for the second consecutive year

Due to COVID-19

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USPA NEWS - When on July 14, 2019, the Navarrese sang the 'Pobre de mí', the song with which they lament the end of the Sanfermines, nobody in Pamplona imagined what would happen a year later. The emergence of COVID-19 in Spain forced the suspension of the San Fermín 2020 festivities. The young men - Navarrese and foreigners of all ages who run the bulls in the Encierros - met for this year, to celebrate special festivals. However, the Government of Navarra and the Pamplona City Council announced on Tuesday the suspension of Sanfermines 2021 due to the health crisis caused by the coronavirus.

Spain is immersed in recent weeks in the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, one year after the appearance of the first cases, accumulates a total of 2,851,869 diagnosed cases, of which 59,805 have died, according to data from the Ministry of Health. Navarra accumulates 48,646 positive cases, with 1,031 deaths from coronavirus. It is the general trend throughout the country and the end of the third wave is not yet in sight. All regional governments, to which the Government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez ceded control of the pandemic, established perimeter confinements in their territories and many of them, also, perimeter confinements of all their municipalities.

It is about containing the expansion of the coronavirus, while enough vaccines arrive to immunize 70% of the Spanish population. It is necessary for the vaccines to arrive and the European Union has demanded that pharmaceutical companies comply with the signed agreements and deliver the vaccines purchased by the EU. According to the Spanish Government, the restrictive measures, which include the prohibition to interact with other people who do not live together; the closure of all non-essential businesses, including bars and restaurants; and the ban on being on the street after 10 pm, are bearing fruit. A decrease in infections is beginning to be noted, although hospital ICUs continue to be in critical condition and close to collapse.

Sanfermines are social festivals, which are lived in the street. People fill the streets, bars and restaurants, souvenir shops and, above all, the Encierros. Everything that, according to experts, should not be done in the fight against COVID-19. For this reason, the Navarran authorities decreed this Tuesday the suspension of Sanfermines 2021: "I am sorry I am not giving good news, it will not be possible," said the president of the regional government of Navarra, María Chivite. "An international festival such as the Sanfermines, in which millions of people come to Navarra, will not be possible," she explained. And she added: "Beyond the fact that we can meet the vaccination expectation of around 40 or 60% of Navarrese at the beginning of the summer, it is not responsible to set expectations that it will not be possible to meet."

More restrained was the mayor of Pamplona, Enrique Naya, who described the explanation of the Navarrese president as "unfortunate". However, he admitted that "we agree: it is very difficult for there to be Sanfermines." Although the mayor added that "we are waiting for the evolution of the data," the reality is that, according to experts, it is unlikely that at the beginning of summer Spain will have achieved the necessary immunity to celebrate its great international parties. The Fallas of Valencia and the Seville April Fair have also been suspended.

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