The Pahiyas festival transforms the small towns of Quezon province from ordinary to exquisite sight. The Season of Festivals is celebrated on the merry month of May. One extravagant festival that everyone is excited to see is the Pahiyas Festival in Quezon Province, which is celebrated on the 15th of May. Quezon, formerly known as Tayabas, is the second largest province in the Southern Tagalog region. The Pahiyas festival is simultaneously celebrated in the towns of Tayabas and Sariaya? Nevertheless, people go to Lucban because of its extravagant preparations which by tradition started during the 16th century as a way of thanksgiving for the peoples bountiful harvest.

The Pahiyas festival transforms the small towns of Quezon province from ordinary to exquisite sight. Originally a pagan harvest festival, it is now commemorated in honor of San Isidro Labrador the patron saint of farmers, peasants, laborers used to be a farmer in Madrid. According to legend, white oxen magically plowed his fields whenever he went to church. After being colonized by...
Spain, the legend was passed on to the Philippines. On the other hand, he was the venerated patron saint of agriculture in Mexico who was called upon by people to ensure the abundant supply of water and fertility of the land.

Pahiyas is a festival that takes a long time to prepare and celebrated only for a short period. One of the much anticipated sights to see is the colorful decoration of houses made from different fruits, vegetables, and kipings. The people of Quezon believed that the practice started when farmers offered foods at the foot of Mount Banahaw. The ritual changed over time and the food offerings was brought to the church. In the old times, farmers brought all their harvest to the church for blessing. They believed that this ritual was essential because they were told that failure to do so could bring deprivation, dearth and misfortune to the town. Later on, the farmers received more blessings and their harvests were bountiful. The Lucban church, known to be the oldest church in the town, soon became the place where the pahiyas festival was held.

The Pahiyas Festival is celebrated in honor of San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers

Photo courtesy of http://www.imagesphilippines.com (Nestor Santiago)
bless the harvest during the procession of the image of San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers and in honor of the festival that is being celebrated. Because of the economic situation, the town decided that every year only assigned houses around the town would participate by means of a competition, the best decorative and creative design of the Pahiyas during the festival. Houses used different fruits, vegetables, hats, baskets, paper-mache and kipings. After the competition, all the decorations will be thrown away to the people. But the important thing to prove that you have been to Lucban is seeing the colorful kipings and tasting the delicious Pancit habhab and longganisang Lucban. The pancit habhab is made from rice flour. These noodles were sold and served on a piece of banana leaf on the streets. It is eaten straight from the leaf, the habhab style. The longganisang Lucban is made of ground pork with fat, oregano extract, paprika, salt, pepper & garlic.

The houses in Lucban during the Pahiyas festival are decorated with fruits, vegetables, and kipings.

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Kiping is leaf-shaped wafers made of rice dyed in brilliant colors. The leaves used include the kabal, kape (brown coffee tree leaf), talisay (umbrella tree), kakaw (cocoa tree), and saba (cooking banana). Rice paste is used to create the kipings. They say, the procedure in making the kiping is a secret and only the chosen ones will be entrusted to make it.

So, get your best and favorite sneakers or rubber shoes, water bottles, cameras, video camera, hats, and umbrellas. Welcome to the Pahiyas Festival!