LA TOMATINA FESTIVAL: THE MESSIEST HOLIDAY IN THE WORLD

The world-famous Tomatina festival has been held in the Valencian town of Buñol on the last Wednesday of August since 1945. Every year, thousands of tourists join the town’s 9,000 inhabitants to throw tonnes of tomatoes at one another. The event, often regarded as the world’s largest food fight, is the culmination of a week-long celebration made up of street parties, fireworks, food fairs and a paella cooking contest.

The tradition began in the mid-1940s, though its origins are unclear. It has been attributed to a foodfight that broke out in the town in 1945 during the “parade of giants and big heads” and had to be broken up by the police. The fight was banned in the early 1950s until 1957, when the locals held a funeral for a giant tomato in protest and successfully had the ban removed.

Over 100 tonnes of tomatoes are brought to the town and thrown during an hour-long battle, at an estimated total cost of €140,000, or €2,300 a minute. In recent years the festival has become so popular that the council decided to limit the attendance to the event to a maximum of 20,000 people.

The fight begins at 11am with the firing of a water cannon. According to the rules, participants must stop throwing tomatoes as soon as they hear the second round of the cannon. Then, it’s time to clean up. Actually, once the tomato pulp is sprayed down by fire trucks, the ground is clean due to the acidity of the tomato.

The tomato festival has become a global phenomenon, with similar festivals staged at one time or another in Colombia, China, the US and Chile.

I * COMPREHENSION (This section consists of six items combining ‘True/False’ and/or ‘Multiple Choice’ questions) (3 points)

1. As a consequence of the huge popularity of the festival, the council:
   (a) has restricted attendance. (b) has extended the duration of the event.
   (c) has forbidden the attendance of foreign people. (d) banned the celebration for a period of time.

2. In the late 50s, the locals ...
   (a) were able to get the festival back after a fight against the police. (b) made the government hold a funeral for a giant tomato.
   (c) used their sense of humour to get the festival back. (d) took part in a giant heads’ parade to protest because the battle had been banned.

ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWERS WITH THE PRECISE WORDS OR PHRASES FROM THE TEXT (0.5 points each)

3. No one seems to know exactly how it all started.
4. The tomatoes are especially delivered for the event.
5. The battle ends after the ground is clean.
6. La Tomatina has inspired other similar celebrations all over the world.

II * USE OF ENGLISH (4 points; questions 7-12, 0.25 points each; 13-17, 0.5 points each)

7. Give one opposite for “popular” (adjective) as it is used in the text (Line 11).
8. Give a verb with the same root as “successfully” (adverb).
9. Find in the text one synonym for “worldwide” (adjective).
10. Fill in the gap with a correct form of the verb in brackets. I couldn’t help ... when I saw her fall down.
11. Fill in the gap with the correct option. “I came ... an old picture of Jake while I was looking through the album” (into / across / out / over)
12. Which word does not have the same meaning? terrible / useful / awful / horrible
13. Rewrite the sentence correctly: “There is much people as hard-working as James.”
14. Turn the following sentence into direct speech: “He asked her to write to him while he was away.”
15. Complete the following conditional sentence. “If he hadn’t shouted at me, ...”
16. Rewrite the sentence without changing its meaning. Begin as indicated: “I haven’t attended La Tomatina for five years.” It’s been five years...
17. Turn the following sentence into the passive voice: James didn’t pay the deposit for the new flat.

III * PRODUCTION (3 points)

18. Write a composition of approximately 120 words about the topic proposed. You must focus strictly on it.

Do you prefer conventional or extreme sports? Explain your answer.