

## **Diri ta sa GenSan ( Come to GenSan)**

General Santos City, fondly called by its constituents as 'GenSan', is really a place to be as its annual Tuna Festival was named as one of the top 5 best tourism event in the country.

Wondering what sets this festival apart from the rest of the country's festivities? Read on...

The Tuna Festival unfolded with a flamboyant burst of dazzling colors worn by street dancers grooving to lively beat of drums, lyres and other musical instruments played by elementary and high school students.

Festive activities capped the city's Tunafest celebration. It started with the generals already out in the streets as early as 6:00 in the morning to join the parade.

Dubbed as "pamahaw at pasasalamat", thanksgiving mass and ecumenical service opened the big day. A free breakfast was then served to everyone as a way of thanksgiving for a good year for the city.

Meanwhile, floats of various and colorful under-the-sea motifs showcasing the ocean's bounty paraded in the Tuna Float competition where hopping human-sea creatures trudged across the city's major streets, dazzling mermaids on board gigantic ships and fishing vessels sailed on roads.

These were some of the sights that one had witnessed parading on the streets showcasing what the tuna city has in store for its people.

The weeklong festival, anchored on tuna, boasted of various events explored by adventurous tourists and local folks.

The Tuna Flea Market showed off bounties of Gensan's tuna products courtesy of the city's entrepreneurs. The tuna's contribution to the city's economy is huge. Six of the eight tuna canneries in the country are located in Gensan. Not only that. Ten out of the 15 tuna processing plants in the Philippines is here in the tuna capital of the country.

Due to this tuna contribution, the city annually hold the Tuna Congress as part of the weeklong celebration where local and foreign tuna businessmen converged to discuss matters regarding tuna export opportunities. For this year, the congress theme was "Quality and Sustainability: Key to Competitive Philippine Tuna Industry".

Adding more prestige to the celebration was the giving of the "Karagatan Awards" to 20 fisher folks and businessmen alike who had done a great job in bringing the city's economy to limelight.

Still hadn't got enough? Well, the tunafest wouldn't be complete without the fabulous Sashimi Night, the eve before the big day. Indeed, it was a gastronomic evening of wasabe and tuna!

Of course, the tunafest experience won't be exciting without a splash on blue waters as the city's finest bancareros arrayed their best boats and zoomed out in the bancarera

competition. There were splashes on water too as the annual Lumba Langoy sa Fishport swimming competition kicked off.

The festival was also a display of power and strength as the search for the biggest tuna and contest for the fastest tuna handling and preparation, "karga tuna" was on. How the crowd was thrilled with these giant tunas in sight!

As the sun lurked to welcome the most awaited night, people unfettered their hips and feet, unleashed their screams, unchained their shindigs and dipped into the all night party frolic along the city's main streets. It's the whole GenSan community out on the streets partying 'til dawn!

Suddenly, all were stunned, thrilled and amazed as the city's night sky burst with display of iridescent colors of spectacular fireworks! It was indeed a night worth remembering!

The Tuna Festival truly etched a mark for the city. It is a celebration of the ocean's wealth – a celebration of life distinctly GenSan.

GenSan is indeed the place to be.

Diri ta sa Gensan!