

5 CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT THE ICONIC “EL CABALLITO” SCULPTURE IN PUERTO VALLARTA

Jorge Chávez Feb. 10, 2025



Puerto Vallarta is a city where art thrives in the open air, and one of its most iconic sculptures is El Caballito, located along the Malecón. This figure of a young rider atop a seahorse is not only a symbol of the city but also holds fascinating details that few people know.

A Childhood Inspiration

Rafael Zamarripa, the sculptor behind this piece, had a deep fascination with seahorses from a young age. In his own words, El Caballito represents the wonder and magic he felt when seeing them in the ocean.

It's True Name

Although commonly known as El Caballito, its official name is El Niño sobre el Caballito de Mar (The Boy on the Seahorse).

The Original Piece

While most residents and visitors are familiar with the sculpture on the Malecón, few know that the original version was placed in the late 1960s at Las Pilitas, at the southern end of Playa Los Muertos.

A Pioneer on the Malecón

After a strong storm swept away the original sculpture from Playa Los Muertos, the artist was commissioned to create a larger replica. This new version was installed in 1976 in a prominent spot along the Malecón, becoming the first of many sculptures that would later adorn this scenic boardwalk.

A Symbol Beyond Puerto Vallarta

El Caballito has been featured in countless promotional campaigns, postcards, and artworks. Its silhouette is so representative of the city that, for many, it is as emblematic as the Malecón itself or the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Every sculpture in Puerto Vallarta has its own story, but few are as beloved and recognizable as El Niño sobre el Caballito de Mar. Next time you see it, remember these fascinating facts and appreciate the art that enhances this beautiful destination.