

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a traditional Mexican holiday where families and friends celebrate and honor their loved ones who have passed away. Traditionally, it is celebrated between October 31 and November 2. In Mexico, the Day of the Dead goes from the eve of November 1 (All Saints Day) through November 2 (All Souls Day).

Those who celebrate this holiday do not view death as an end of life, but rather a continuation of it. They embrace death through festive and colorful decorations. Typically, family and friends build and gather around an elaborate homemade altar called an Ofrenda to remember and pray for their loved ones.

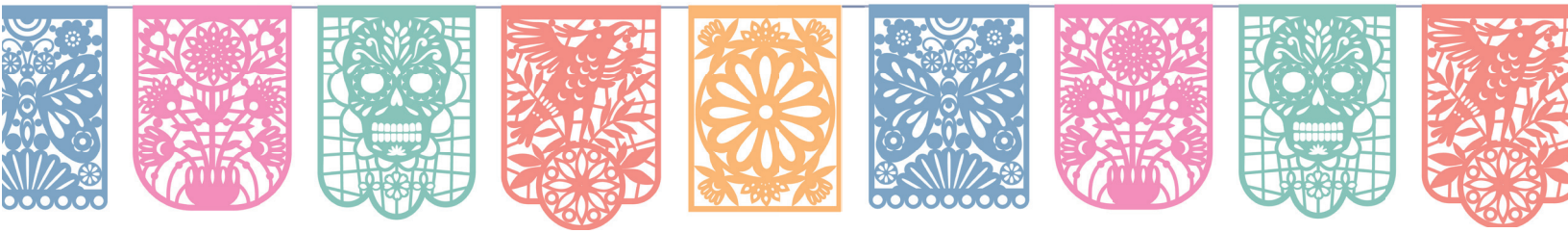
Within their home, church, or communal space, the altar is decorated with traditional and personal items to honor the deceased. It includes fresh flowers such as yellow marigolds, photographs, their loved ones' favorite foods and drinks, candles, papel picado (tissue paper cut with elaborate designs), skulls, and much more.

Families and friends will also visit the graves of their loved ones to clean their headstone and offer fresh flowers, food and drinks, candy, and other special possessions. Visitors also join to pay their respects and walk around the essence of life, energy, and celebration.

With the offerings and sounds of prayers and music, it is believed this will guide the deceased souls back to the living realm to reunite and rejoice!

Reference:
<https://dayofthedead.holiday/>





UNDERSTANDING THE OFRENDA

The Ofrenda is an offering to the deceased. The altar consists of a unique set of traditional and personal items to capture the personality and spirit of loved ones. Depending on the location of the altar, the display size can be small and personal or large and grand.

Typically, the altar is created on a table, shelf, or other flat surface. Boxes or crates are added to create different tiers of the display. A tablecloth is laid over the surface and the papel picado is layered around the edge.

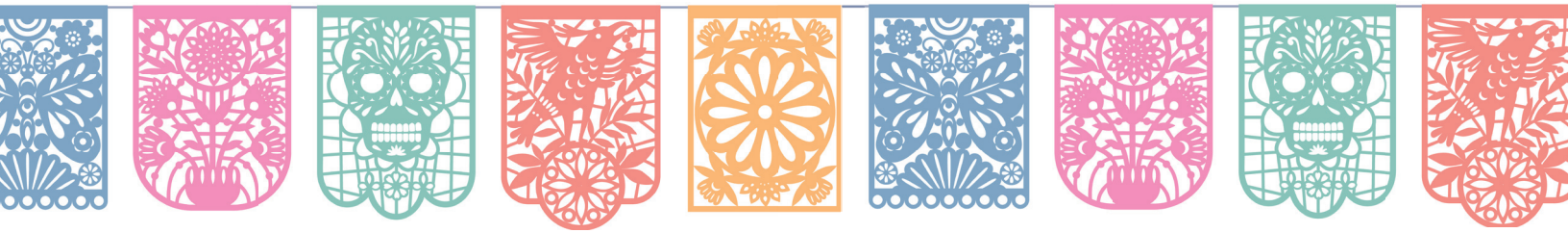
Items such as marigold flowers, candles and incense, water, food and drinks, skulls, photographs, and more adorn the altar. Below is a breakdown of the traditional elements and their significant purpose:

- Natural elements include earth, fire, water, and air
- Water represents life and quenches the thirst of the deceased
- Salt purifies and preserves the soul and acts as an invitation
- Calaveras de azucar (sugar skulls) bring a sweet and nostalgic reminder of life
- El Pan de Muerto (bread of the dead) is a type of pan dulce (sweet bread) that acts as a representation of the body
- Flor de Cempasúchil (marigold flower), rich in smell and color, act as a guide towards the altar
- Candles act as a source of light that guides the deceased's journey to the living world and back
- Incense clears the body and space of negative energies and spirits and brings a pleasing smell
- Papel Picado decorates for the special occasion
- Personal items, such as toys and candy for children and photographs and mementos for adults, adorn the altar

Reference:

<https://dayofthedead.holiday/traditions/the-ofrenda>
<https://www.tripsavvy.com/make-day-of-dead-altar-1588750>





VISTING THE ALTAR

Montalvo's Lucas Artists Program is proud to present "Veinte/Veinte" (2020), an installation created by artists Hector Dionicio Mendoza and Angelica Muro as part of Día de Los Muertos. This installation will be open to the public from Wednesday, October 28 through Wednesday, November 4.

This altar is designed for visitors to feel welcomed by leaving a special item or object in remembrance of deceased relative or other loved one who has passed.

Suggested items include copies of photographs, writing, drawings, etc. Please note, we cannot accept perishables and any contributed items will not be returned.

To prepare for your visit, consider with your parent/guardian how you would like to represent your loved one in a public space.

1. How do we remember loved ones in private versus remembering them in public?

2. What memorable story would you share to describe a loved one to a stranger?

3. What offerings would you place on the altar? Who would this be for? (It can be a family member, friend, pet, etc.)
