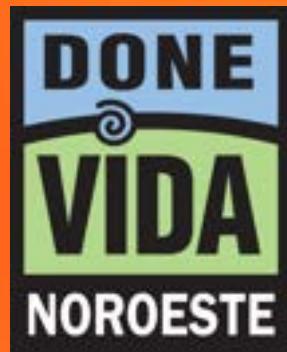


Dia de los Muertos



Day of the Dead, in the indigenous vision, implies the transitory return of the souls of the deceased, who return home, to the world of the living, to live with relatives and be nourished by the essence of the food that is offered to them on the altars placed in their honor.

El Día de Muertos en la visión indígena implica el retorno transitorio de las ánimas de los difuntos, quienes regresan a casa, al mundo de los vivos, para convivir con los familiares y para nutrirse de la esencia del alimento que se les ofrece en los altares puestos en su honor.



The richness of this tradition in the Latin culture is so important that UNESCO inscribed it on its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, defining it as a traditional integrative and representative community expression.

La riqueza de esta tradición en la cultura de los Latinos es tan importante, que la UNESCO la inscribió en su lista de Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de la Humanidad, definiéndola como una expresión tradicional integradora, representativa y comunitaria.



Important dates





October 28

The first candle is lit and a white flower is placed to receive the souls alone.

Se prende la primera veladora y se coloca una flor blanca para recibir a las ánimas solas.

October 29

Another candle is lit and a glass of water is placed, dedicated to the forgotten and helpless deceased.

Se prende otra veladora y se coloca un vaso con agua, dedicado a difuntos olvidados y desamparados.

October 30

A new candle is lit, another glass of water is placed and white bread is placed for the deceased who left without eating or those who had an accident.

Se prende una nueva veladora, se coloca otro vaso con agua y se pone un pan blanco para los difuntos que se fueron sin comer o los que tuvieron algún accidente.

October 31

Another candle is lit, we put another glass of water, another white bread, and place a piece of fruit. This is for the dead of the dead (ancestors), that is, our great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents.

Se prende otra veladora, ponemos otro vaso con agua, otro pan blanco y colocamos una fruta. Esto es para los muertos de los muertos (ancestros), es decir, nuestros bisabuelos y tatarabuelos.

November 1

All Saints' Day, the date on which the "little angels" arrive at noon, who are the souls of those who died as children. On this day all the food is placed on the altar of the dead.

Día de Todos los Santos, fecha en la que al medio día llegan los "angelitos" que son las almas de quienes fallecieron siendo niños. En este día se pone toda la comida en el altar de muertos.

November 2

Known as All Souls' Day, it is believed that it is the souls of the adult dead who come to collect and eat the offerings that their family placed on the altar. Copal incense is burned and a path is decorated with cempasuchil petals to guide them to the offering.

Conocido como el día de los Fieles Difuntos, se tiene la creencia de que son las almas de los muertos adultos quienes llegan a recoger y comer las ofrendas que su familia colocó en el altar. Se quema incienso de copal y se adorna un camino con petalos de cempasuchil para guiarlos a la ofrenda.

November 3

The last white candle is lit, copal incense burned, we say goodbye to the souls of our dead and we ask them to come back the following year. The raising of the offering takes place.

Se prende la última veladora blanca, se quema copa y se despide a las almas de nuestros muertos y les pedimos que vuelvan el siguiente año. Se realiza el levantamiento de la ofrenda.



Ofrenda/Altar





The altar is a fundamental element in the celebration of the Day of the Dead. People believe that the spirit of their deceased returns from the world of the dead to live with the family that day, and thus console and comfort them for their loss.

El altar de muertos es un elemento fundamental en la celebración del Día de Muertos. Las personas tienen la creencia de que el espíritu de sus difuntos regresa del mundo de los muertos para convivir con la familia ese día, y así consolarlos y confortarlos por la pérdida.



The most common are two-tier altars, which represent heaven and earth; instead, the three-tiered altars add to this vision the concept of purgatory. At the same time, an altar with seven levels symbolizes the necessary steps to reach heaven and thus be able to rest in peace. This is considered the traditional altar par excellence. In its preparation, certain basic elements must be considered. Each of the steps has a different meaning.

Los más comunes son los altares de dos niveles, que representan el cielo y la tierra; en cambio, los altares de tres niveles añaden a esta visión el concepto del purgatorio. A su vez, en un altar de siete niveles se simbolizan los pasos necesarios para llegar al cielo y así poder descansar en paz. Este es considerado como el altar tradicional por excelencia. En su elaboración se deben considerar ciertos elementos básicos. Cada uno de los escalones tienen un significado distinto.

2 levels niveles

Represent heaven and earth
Representa el cielo y la tierra

3 levels niveles

Purgatory concept
Concepto del purgatorio

7 levels niveles

Symbolize the steps to get to heaven.
Simbolizan los pasos para llegar al cielo y
descansar



Level 1. The image of the saint to whom one has devotion is placed. Perpetual candles should not be missing near portraits and images of the offering.

Level 2. It is dedicated to the souls in purgatory. It grants permission to the souls to leave that place, therefore, the placement of an image of the souls of purgatory is ideal.

Level 3. Salt is one of the essential elements on the altar, so it should be placed on this step to prevent the body from being corrupted and to purify the spirit.

Level 4. Bread of the Dead (Pan de Muerto), an element that represents the Eucharist in the Catholic liturgy, should not be missing from the fourth step.

Level 5. Dishes, fruit, sweets, and in general, all the favorite food of the deceased.

Level 6. The portrait of the deceased is placed on the sixth step. The candles accompany the image of the loved one so that the light guides their path to and from.

Level 7. The cross, the highest symbol of the Catholic religion, is displayed on the seventh level to atone the faults of the deceased. According to tradition, a cross must be formed with seeds, fruits, and lime, in some cases salt is also added.

Nivel 1. Se coloca la imagen del santo al que se le tenga devoción. Las velas perpetuas no deben faltar cerca de retratos e imágenes de la ofrenda.

Nivel 2. Se dedica a las ánimas del purgatorio. Otorga el permiso a las almas para salir de ese lugar, por ello, resulta ideal la colocación de una imagen de las ánimas del purgatorio.

Nivel 3. La sal es uno de los elementos imprescindibles en el altar, por ello debe colocarse en este escalón para evitar que el cuerpo se corrompa y se purifique el espíritu.

Nivel 4. Pan de muerto, un elemento que representa la eucaristía en la liturgia católica no debe faltar en el cuarto escalón.

Nivel 5. Platillos, fruta, dulces y en general todo alimento que era del gusto del difunto o difuntos.

Nivel 6. El retrato de los difuntos se coloca en el sexto escalón. Las veladoras acompañan la imagen del ser querido para que la luz guía su camino de ida y de regreso.

Nivel 7. La cruz, símbolo cumbre de la religión católica, se despliega en el séptimo nivel para expiar las culpas del difunto. De acuerdo a la tradición debe formarse una cruz con semillas, frutas y cal, en algunos casos también se agrega la sal.

What traditionally goes on a
Dia de los Muertos altar?



Boxes / Tables
Cajas / Mesas



Candles
Velas



Table cloths
Manteles



Copal and incense
Copal e Incienso



Papel
Picado



Flowers
Flores



Flor
de cempasúchil



Sugar skulls
Calaveritas de azucar



Pictures
Fotos



Pan de Muerto



Personal items
Objetos personales



Salt
Sal



Toys
Juguetes



Fruit
Fruta



Water
Agua



Food
Comida



What do the elements
on the altar represent?





CANDLES

They keep vigil throughout the night, illuminating the way for visiting souls.



PAPEL PICADO

Papel picado is brightly colored tissue paper with cut-out designs, and it's one of the most iconic Day of the Dead decorations. The designs are often images of skulls, saints, flowers, and candles.



FLOWERS

Marigold flowers, called cempasúchil, are strewn on the floor, their color and strong scent creating a path to guide visiting souls to the altar.



PERSONAL OBJECTS

Families commonly include meaningful items that belonged to the deceased person or that reflect what they liked. This might mean toys for children, an object from the person's profession, or a hobby they enjoyed.



INCENSE

Originally, indigenous people in Mexico used copal incense in their religious ceremonies, made from the resin of trees. Incense is also said to cleanse the air, keeping bad spirits or negative energy away.



PHOTOGRAPHS OR PAINTINGS

Families often place portraits of their ancestors and relatives on the altar.



WATER

A glass of water is set out to welcome thirsty souls after their long journey back from the afterlife. Water can also symbolize purity.



SALT

Salt is another element of purification. It is sometimes shaped into a cross to represent the four cardinal points (north, south, east, and west).



ARC

Some altars include an arc that stretches along the back of the ofrenda. It can be adorned with flores de cempasúchil or lights.

FRUITS

In addition to specific dishes of food, fruit is commonly placed on altars as an element of earth and what it provides for us.



PLATE OF FOOD

Families often include traditional food and favorite dishes for their departed loved ones. It is said the aroma of the food feeds their hungry souls.

DRINKS

Many families include drinks to welcome and cheer up the visiting adult souls.



PAN DE MUERTO

Pan de Muerto is a kind of sweet bread. It is usually round, with the shape of crossed bones on the top.



SUGAR SKULLS

Sugar skulls represent the presence of death, along with an acceptance that death is part of life.

Vocabulary



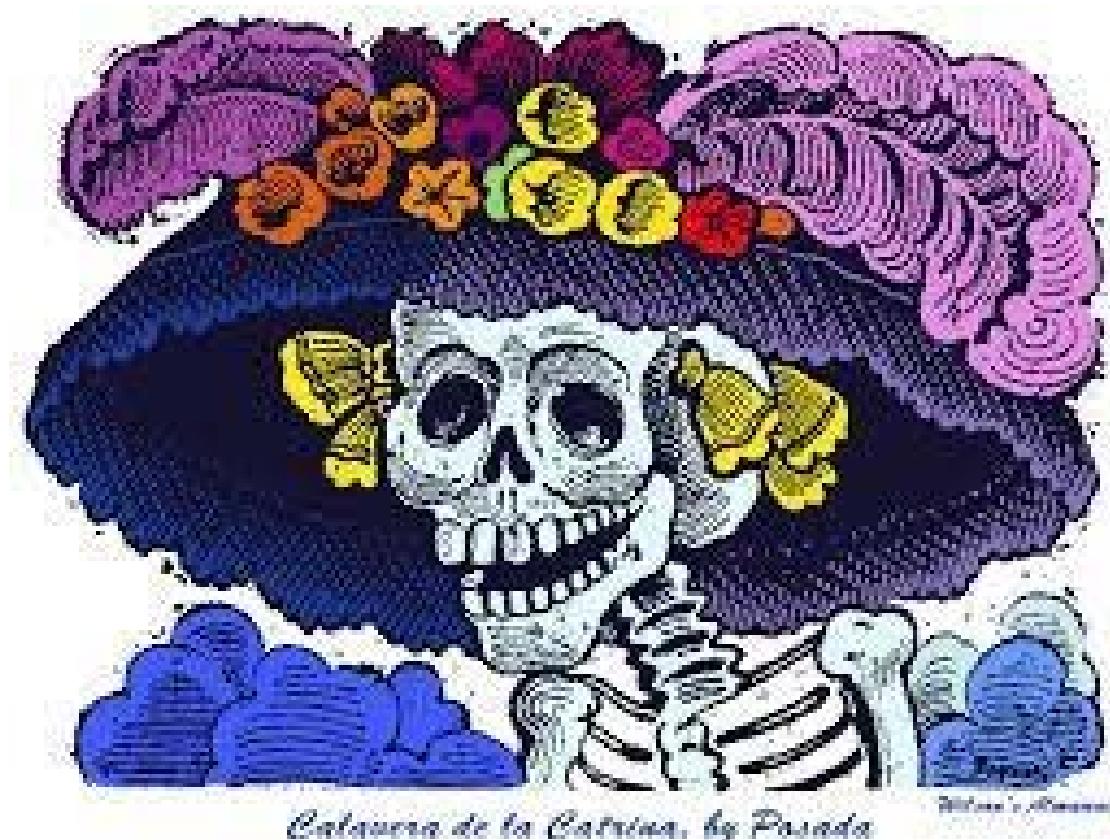
CALACA

This is a Mexican Spanish slang word for skeleton. Calacas figure prominently in Day of the Dead decorations. Sometimes the term "La Calaca" is used to signify death personified. Other words that are also used for the personification of death include "la Pelona" (the bald one), "la Flaca" (the skinny one), "la Huesuda" (the bony one). These are all used in the feminine form.



CATRINA

La Catrina is a character that was created by Mexican lithographer and illustrator Jose Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913). La Catrina is a female skeleton who is dressed in the style of upper-class women of the period. Posada initiated the tradition of depicting contemporary figures as skeletons in a humorous way was a form of social commentary. La Catrina has become a prominent figure in Day of the Dead decorations and celebrations.



TODOS LOS SANTOS

Todos los Santos is "All Saints." Celebrated on the first of November, this is the first day of the Day of the Dead (Dia de los Muertos) celebration, when deceased children and infants, los angelitos, are honored. These "angels" are believed to have died before their souls could be sullied by sin.

FIELES DIFUNTOS

Fieles Difuntos means "faithful departed" and the term refers to the Catholic celebration of All Souls. In Catholicism, the commemoration or honoring of all the faithful departed is celebrated on November 2nd.

LOS ALEBRIJES

Mythical creatures from Mexican folk art that are also part of Day of the Dead celebrations



