

Day of the Dead

All about Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Day of the Dead is the English name for the Mexican festival Día de los Muertos. It is a celebration during which the dead are honoured. Surprisingly, it is not a sombre and melancholy time, but a time of rejoicing and memories. It is celebrated in Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala and other areas in Central and South America. Similarly, it is also celebrated in areas of North America, such as California and Texas, where the Mexican/American heritage exists.

The festival lasts for three days from 31st October until 2nd November and it is a fiesta of flowers, food, candles, parades, prayer and fun. People dress up as skeletons and wear elaborate costumes and masks.

The first day is on the same day as Halloween, the 31st October. On this day at midnight, it is believed that the gates of heaven are opened. The second day, the 1st November, is when the spirits of deceased children (angelitos) visit. The third and final day, the 2nd November, is when the spirits of adults visit.



Altar

An area created at graveyards with items to remember loved ones and where candles are lit to guide their spirits. Altars include: pictures of the deceased person, items that they liked, something to eat, candles, flowers and gifts.

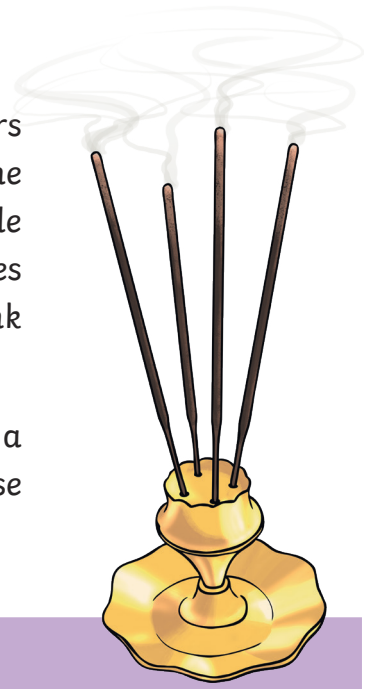


Day of the Dead

Soul Attraction

Candles (las velas) are lit during the afternoon at altars and grave sites to burn all evening. The light of the candles guide the way for souls. Sometimes, each candle lit represents a departed soul and certain coloured candles have meanings: purple for pain, white for hope and pink for celebration.

The final thing added to the altars is incense, which is a perfumed, white smoke thought to attract souls of those who have gone.



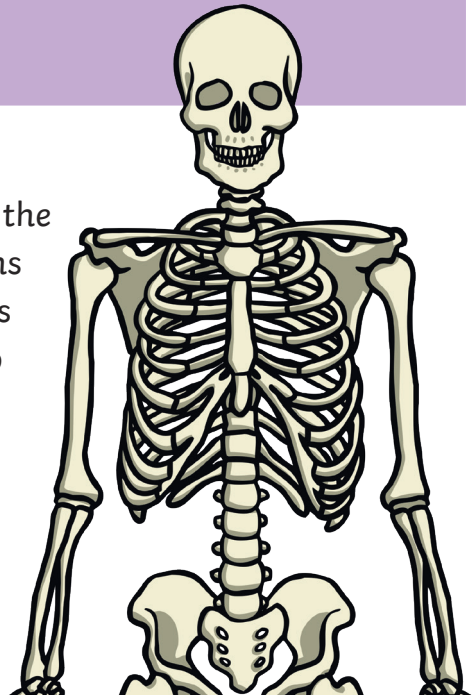
Pan de Muertos

During the celebrations, special bread called Pan de Muertos (bread of the dead) is eaten. This bread represents the souls of those who have passed on. The loaves are sometimes baked in the shape of skulls or round and decorated with bones. The bread is often decorated with brightly coloured icing or seeds, which represent happiness in some areas of Mexico.

Calacas

Skeletons are a constant emblem during Day of the Dead. Not only are skeletons seen in decorations but also in sweets, chocolates and toys. The toys and dolls are called 'calacas' and are used to introduce children to the idea of death so that they are not afraid of it. Often, the calacas are grinning because they are laughing at death. They are even shown as musicians or on horseback to show a joyful afterlife.

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Day of the Dead is the English name for the Mexican festival called Día de los Muertos (say: dee-a de loss mur-toes). It is a celebration where the dead are honoured. Surprisingly, it is not a sombre and miserable time, but a time of happiness and memories. It is celebrated in Mexico, Ecuador, and other areas in Central and South America as well as in areas of North America, such as California and Texas, where Mexicans have brought the tradition.

The festival lasts for three days from 31st October until 2nd November and it is a carnival of colour with flowers, food, candles, parades, prayer and fun. People dress up as skeletons and wear colourful, fancy costumes and masks.

The first day is on the same day as Halloween in the UK, the 31st October. On this day at midnight, it is believed that the gates of heaven are opened, releasing souls of those who have died. The second day, the 1st November, is when the spirits of children who have died visit. The third and final day, the 2nd November, is when the spirits of adults visit.



Altar

An area created at graveyards where candles are lit to remember loved ones who have died. Altars have lots of things on them including: pictures of the deceased person, things they liked, food, candles, flowers and gifts.

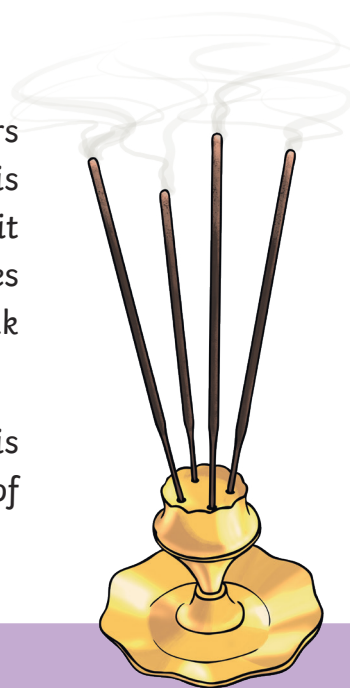


Day of the Dead

Soul Attraction

Candles (las velas) are lit during the afternoon at altars to burn all through the night. The light of the candles is said to guide the way for souls. Sometimes each candle lit represents a person who has died. Also, coloured candles have meanings: purple for pain, white for hope and pink for celebration.

The final thing added to the altars is incense, which is a nice-smelling, white smoke thought to attract souls of those who have gone.



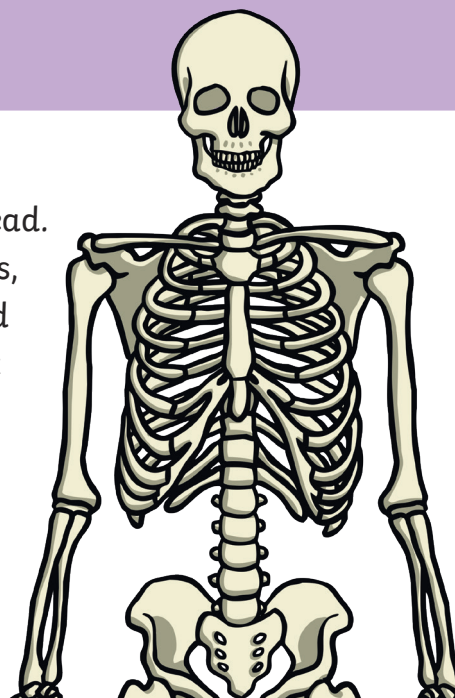
Pan de Muertos (say: pan de mur-toe)

During the celebrations, a special bread called Pan de Muertos (bread of the dead) is eaten representing people who have died. This can be found in the shape of a skull or sometimes a round loaf decorated with bone shapes. The bread is often decorated with brightly coloured icing or seeds, meaning 'happiness'.

Calacas

Skeletons are a main symbol of Day of the Dead. They are seen in decorations and also in sweets, chocolates and toys. The toys and dolls are called 'calacas' and are used to show children that death is something of which you should not be afraid. Calacas are usually smiling and having fun because they are laughing at death and showing that the afterlife is good.

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All about Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Day of the Dead is the English name for the Mexican festival called Día de los Muertos (say: dee-a de loss mur-toes). It is a time when people think about all the people who have died. You might be surprised to find out that it is not a sad time, but a time of happiness and good memories. It is celebrated in Mexico and other areas of Central North and South America where Mexicans have brought the tradition with them.

The festival starts on 31st October and lasts for three days. It is a colourful festival with lots of flowers, food, candles, parades, prayer and fun. People dress up as skeletons and wear colourful costumes and masks.

The first day is on the same day as Halloween in the UK and this is when it is believed that the gates of heaven open to let out the souls of people who have died. On the second day, spirits of children who have died visit and on the last day, spirits of adults who have died come.



Altar

An area created at graveyards. At the altar, candles are lit to remember loved ones who have died. Altars have lots of things on them including: photographs of the person who has died, things they liked, food, candles, flowers and gifts.

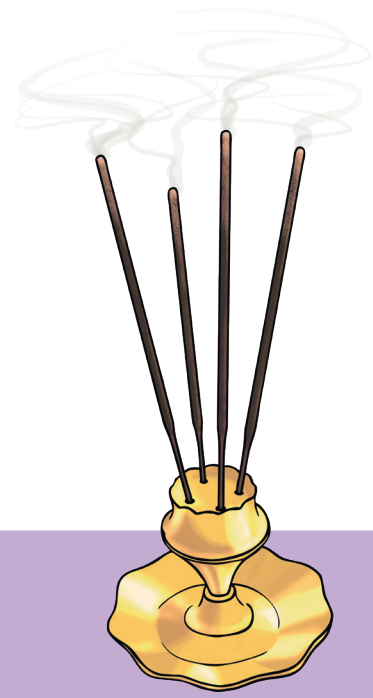


Day of the Dead

Soul Attraction

Candles are lit during the afternoon to burn all through the night. Sometimes each candle lit represents a person who has died. Also, coloured candles have meanings: purple for pain, white for hope and pink for celebration.

The last thing added to the altars is incense, which is a nice-smelling, white smoke said to help souls visit.



Pan de Muertos (say: pan de mur-toe)

This is a special type of bread that is eaten during the festival and its name means 'bread of the dead'. The bread can be in the shape of a skull or a round loaf decorated with bone shapes. The bread is often decorated with brightly coloured icing or seeds, meaning 'happiness'.

Calacas

Skeletons are a main symbol of Day of the Dead. They are seen in decorations and also in sweets, chocolates and toys. The toys and dolls are called 'calacas' and are used to show children that death is something of which you should not be afraid. Calacas are usually smiling and having fun because they are laughing at death and showing that the afterlife is good.

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