

# Día de los Muertos

Día de los Muertos, otherwise known as Day of the Dead, is a holiday that originated in Mexico, but is also celebrated in South America and now parts of the United States where Latino families celebrate “the return” of their deceased relatives. This is a two day celebration occurring from November 1st to November 2nd. These days encompass the end of Halloween day, el Día de los Inocentes (day of the children), and Día de los Muertos. The belief is that the gates of heaven are opened and children are able to rejoin their families on November 1st, while adults are able to rejoin their families on November 2nd.

## Origin

Día de los Muertos was first practiced by the Aztecs and the Toltecs thousands of years ago. Death was not seen as the end of life, simply a new transition in life. Instead of grieving for the dead because they believed the dead would be saddened, death was celebrated. Scholars believe that Día de los Muertos now has influence from modern Catholicism as it was imposed on indigenous customs when it was brought to Mexico in the 16th century.



## Rituals

Depending on the family, location, etc. there are many different rituals that are done during this time. In many locations, families will visit gravesites of deceased family members, create alters for the dead, and leave various offerings. For instance, my family stated they would leave flowers, create their loved ones favorite dishes or if they enjoyed an alcoholic drink, they would leave something, such as a Corona, or their favorite beer at their alter or gravesite. Families may also light candles and set up a photo of their family members as well. Families will then continue to celebrate the life of the deceased, tell stories, and enjoy life.

