

# DAY OF THE DEAD

[http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/holidays/ddead\\_kids.html](http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/holidays/ddead_kids.html)

On November second, we celebrate a holiday as old as Mexican history itself. That day, children don't have to go to school because, just as we celebrate Mother's Day or Father's Day, our relatives who are no longer with us also have their fiesta.



And how do we celebrate? Traditionally, we make an **ofrenda** in the main room. To make an offering, put a piece of cutout paper (thin colored paper with a design cut out) like a tablecloth on a big table. Find a photo of a beloved relative and put it in front.

Then think of that person's favorite food and drink and add that to the offering. If you can't remember, you can use typical Mexican food: *atole*, *mole* or *tamales*. Remember that, according to the tradition, that night he or she will come to your house to share the dinner with you. To guide the person, light some candles and make a path of flowers with *cempasúchitl* (**Marigolds**), which have been considered the special flower of the dead since pre-Hispanic times.



You are going to enjoy this fiesta since you get to eat your **candy skulls**. You can also give some to your friends. Don't forget the delicious Bread for the Dead, made specially for these days. You can put the offering up at the end of October and leave it until the second of November.

That night, people also go to the graveyards to greet and visit with their loved ones. If you go to one, you will see a lot of people singing and bringing flowers and food. Just imagine, this holiday we celebrate in Mexico is unique in the world. Many foreigners who live here are amazed and enjoy seeing us remember our dead with such joy.

The word **calavera** means skull in Spanish, but it is also the name of a lot of things relating to the dead, poems, drawings, candy skulls and more.

This famous calavera who happily lives among the Mexicans is called **Catrina**. You will always find her very elegantly dressed to go out with her great feathered hat. Her creator was painter and engraver José Guadalupe Posada, who lived in the early 1900's. Posada was a great illustrator of his people and his times. His work includes more than 930 illustrations that reflect the Mexico of the end of last century and the beginning of this one: political and cultural events, and the customs, traditions and feelings of his country... he was like a reporter of Mexico, but in drawings.



Posada drew our Catrina imitating the French-styled ladies of his era, that is to say, they imitated the fashions of France; they were known as Catrinas or dressed-up ladies, and their husbands as Catrinos. That is why he thought of using a skull as a figure we can play with, decorate, and even joke about.

Don't miss out on this interesting tradition!

DEFINITION

CHARACTERISTICS

EXAMPLES

NON-EXAMPLES

**DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS**