

Día de los Muertos at the Peabody Museum

Sunday, November 1, 2015

12:00-4:00 pm

All activities take place on the third floor.
Please leave strollers on the first floor.

Calaca Mask

Decorate a skull (*calaca*) mask in a *Día de los Muertos* style.

Paper Marigolds

Craft traditional paper flowers called *cempasúchil* to wear.

Skull Bead Jewelry

Add a few special beads to make a take-home bracelet.

Messages of Love

Welcome departed loved ones with a handwritten message, placed on the central altar or on the community altar.

Aztec Foods (two locations)

- Learn about cacao and enjoy Mexican or spicy Aztec hot chocolate.
- Try traditional *pan de muerto* (bread of the dead) & learn about the original Aztec festival.

Woodcarver

Watch as master woodcarver Ventura Fabian and son Norberto of Oaxaca, Mexico, create remarkable folk art. *Carvings available for purchase.*

Papel Picado

Craft a paper banner like the ones overhead.

Mariachi Music Maker

Create a spinning hand-drum to play along with *Mariachi Veritas*.

Meet the Central Ofrenda Artist

12:30 - 2:30 pm

Javier González Rodríguez of Olinalá, Guerrero, Mexico, carries on its world famous lacquerware work. His art is inspired by his hometown's artistic techniques and traditional motifs.

Mariachi Veritas

1:00 - 1:20 pm & 1:45 - 2:10 pm

Join in the music-making with Harvard's student *mariachi* troupe.

Harvard Ballet Folklórico de Aztlán

3:00 - 3:20 pm

Enjoy a folk-dance performance, then learn a few simple steps.

Sugar Skull Workshop

Decorate one of these popular festival confections (fee \$5.00 per sugar skull). Space available on a first-come, first-serve basis. *Last seating for workshop at 3:30 pm.*

Amigos School Artwork

Students at the Amigos Two-way Bilingual School in Cambridge created artwork that reflects their understanding of this holiday.



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About *El Día de los Muertos*

On November 1 and 2nd, Mexico celebrates “*El Día*” or “the Day of the Dead.” This is a national holiday, but its roots go far into the past and the festival still reflects pre-Hispanic traditions and attitudes towards death. Throughout this holiday, Mexicans celebrate death as a part of life, rather than as something to be feared. During *Día de los Muertos*, the souls of departed loved ones are welcomed back to earth for a few special hours. Mexico is comprised of many different ethnic groups and every community has its own unique and distinct customs for welcoming back the dead. The basic ritual, however, remains the same: families prepare altars at home and travel to their loved ones’ graves which they decorate with bright yellow flowers – *cempasuchils* (flowers of the dead) – as well as with family photos, candles, religious images, offerings of food and drink, and even special objects loved by the deceased in life.

Weeks before, bakers and artisans begin creating a dazzling display of sugar skulls (*calacas*), sweet “bread of the dead” (*pan de muertos*), cut paper (*papel picado*) and colorful masks and other crafts. On the holiday evenings, many cemeteries are filled with families keeping night-long vigils by their loved ones’ graves. Community feasting, music, and storytelling are common. However, despite the communal, festive nature of the holiday, the Day of the Dead ultimately remains a private, sacred event during which individuals contemplate the transitory nature of life.

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology
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