



Lotería de Día de los Muertos

One of the most famous Mexican holidays, **Día de los Muertos** – meaning Day of the Dead – is a holiday celebrated in Mexico every Nov 1st and 2nd. Homes, towns, and especially cemeteries are decorated with colorful flower petals, cut tissue paper decorations, candles, and photos of loved ones who have passed away. It is a time for honoring those who have passed and celebrating their lives. It is not just a time of mourning, but of celebration and love. Join our journey to learn about this holiday, while playing a captivating game of *lotería*!

How to Play

First, print out the Tablas and Cartas pages. Cut out *las cartas* – this will make up your card deck.

Next, each player takes a *tabla* and a handful of beans (you can also use coins, buttons, etc).

A card is pulled from the deck, and players who have the picture of that card on their board put a bean on top of it.

Cards continue to be dealt from the deck, until one player makes either a row or a column on their *tabla*. When they do, they get one point, and the *tablas* are cleared for the next round.

The first player to make it to ten points wins.



Félix trajo sus tijeras para ayudarte a cortar las cartas. ||
Félix brought his scissors to help you cut the cards.

Lotería de Día de los Muertos

Las Cartas

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.



LAS VELADORAS



LAS CALAVERITAS



EL PAN DE MUERTO



EL INCENSARIO

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.

LAS CALAVERITAS

Calaveritas, the word translating directly to “little skulls” – have two meanings: small sugar skulls and poems. During the days and weeks leading up to Día de los Muertos, markets are filled with small skulls made from sugar poured into molds and then decorated with colorful frosting and brightly colored foil.

Literary calaveritas are also a part of the holiday festivities – these were short poems and stories, often with a satirical nature, ridiculing prominent political figures. Today, they are short poems, similar to an epitaph, poking humorous fun at characteristics of living friends and family as if they had already passed.

LAS VELADORAS

Las veladoras, or candles, are a big part of the holiday – the light and flame of which invite a soul back to celebrate with their living relatives. Families will place the candles both on their in-home ofrenda and at the cemetery near the graves of their deceased loved ones. The light from the candles is representative of hope and faith, and is intended to guide the souls back to the realm of the living. Placing a candle in a window at dusk means that you are thinking of your ancestors, inviting them home, and have faith that wherever they are, they are okay.

EL INCENSARIO

Used in many religious events and masses, *el incensario* is a ceramic bowl used to burn herbs and incense such as *copal* (a fragrant tree sap). It is a tool of prayer and is also thought to cleanse a space of bad spirits, thoughts or vibes. It is also thought to help guide the souls of the dead home to visit the living.

EL PAN DE MUERTO

A type of sweet bread, baked into shapes resembling bones, wheels, and other symmetrical patterns, and sprinkled with sugar. They are used as offerings in ofrendas to the spirits of relatives who have passed – and of course, to be enjoyed by the living! If you'd like to try baking it, check out the recipe in our Resources section.

Lotería de Día de los Muertos

Las Cartas

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.



LOS CEMPASÚCHILES



LA CATRINA



EL PANTEÓN



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.

LA CATRINA

Wearing a fancy wide-brimmed hat, the skeleton woman known as La Catrina was a re-imagination of the Aztec goddess of death Mictecacíhuatl [mik-teh-ka-SEE-wah-tl]. The modern Doña Muerte was brought to life in the early 1900s by artist José Guadalupe Posada, a controversial political cartoonist who depicted fancy rich people as skeletons in a satirical way. Many Mexicans at the time had aspired to dress and look like European aristocrats, but Posada wanted to remind folks that no matter how rich or poor, no matter the color of your skin, and no matter what echelon of society you belong to, we all end up in the same place. As he put it: "death is democratic."

LA CALABAZA EN TACHA

Calabaza en tacha, or candied pumpkin, is a traditional Día de los Muertos meal, made from pumpkin cooked with cinnamon, orange juice, and *piloncillo* (Mexican brown sugar, which usually comes in a cone shape).

LOS CEMPASÚCHILES

Cempasúchiles [sem-pa-SOO-cheel-es], also sometimes called the Aztec marigold and well known as the *flor de muertos* (flower of the dead), grow in the wild in central and southern Mexico. The Aztecs used the flowers for medical and decorative purposes, and they are still used for everything from fabric dyes to culinary flourishes to medicine. The vibrant orange flowers are harvested and used each year to decorate gravestones and ofrendas during the celebration of Día de los Muertos – it is said that the spirits of the dead are attracted by the strong scent of the flowers (along with the incense and light from the candles). The word *cempasúchil* comes from the Nahuatl term for the flower *cempohualxochitl*, meaning "twenty flower" – most likely a references to the many petals.

EL PANTEÓN

Communities gather across Mexico to clean and decorate their cemeteries. *Los panteones*, meaning tombs, catacombs, or mausoleums, are swept, washed, and decorated to the nines with *cempasúchiles*, *veladoras* (votive candles), and *papel picado* in preparation for the holiday.

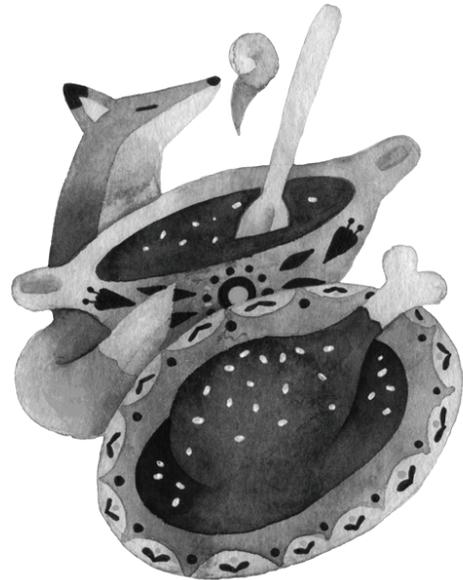
Lotería de Día de los Muertos

Las Cartas

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.



LA OFRENDA



EL MOLE



EL CHAMPURRADO



EL RETRATO

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.

EL MOLE

More chocolate! Different regions and seasons feature different types of *mole*, from *mole verde* made with green *pepitas* (pumpkin seeds) to *mole rojo* made with *guajillos*, *almendrado* made with almonds to *mole negro* and *mole poblano*, which are both made with chocolate. As with many Mexican foods, its origins trace back to the Aztecs. Called *mulli* (meaning “mix” or “sauce”) it was a dish reserved for special occasions, most often combined with turkey. The chocolate type of mole is a mainstay of Día de los Muertos festivities. Although there are as many mole recipes as there are families in Mexico, check the Resources list for a pretty standard mole recipe. It may take half a day to cook, but you will not be disappointed!

EL RETRATO

A necessary part of all Día de los Muertos festivities is *el retrato*: a portrait of a loved one who has passed. It is placed on the ofrenda amidst the person's favorite foods and belongings.

LA OFRENDA

La ofrenda, a word with the same origin as English “offering,” is an altar or oblation created to honor the spirits of the dead and celebrate their favorite things: from food and drink to trinkets and games. Portraits of ancestors are placed along with crucifixes, candles, *cempasúchil* flower petals, *papel picado*, images, and sometimes statues of saints.

The elements of the ofrenda usually represent the four elements: fire (candles), wind (*papel picado*), earth (food), and water. Most ofrendas provide water to quench the thirst of the spirits after their long journey, food to satiate their hunger, candles to light their way, sometimes a washbasin, soap, and a towel so that the spirit can clean up when they arrive. Other items that can be seen in ofrendas are mirrors (some will place portraits facing away but with a mirror in front of them, representing the idea that we may see the spirits of the dead only indirectly).

EL CHAMPURRADO

Champurrado is a type of *atole*, which is a drink made from corn *masa* (ground dried corn), *canela* (cinnamon), and *piloncillo* (brown sugar), served warm. Champurrado specifically is atole flavored with chocolate, and is a traditional beverage enjoyed on and around Día de los Muertos.

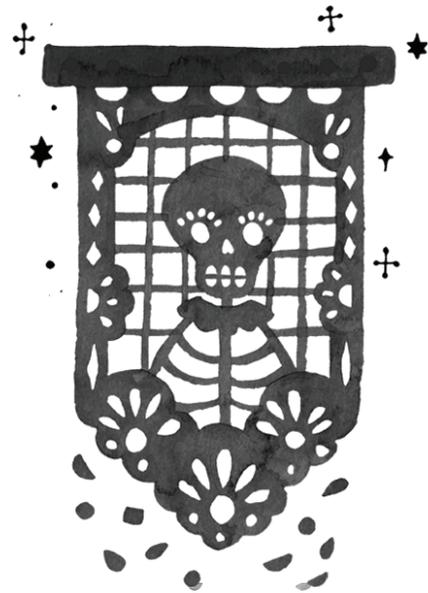
Lotería de Día de los Muertos

Las Cartas

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.



LAMARIPOSA MONARCA



EL PAPEL PICADO



LAS CALACAS

Cut these cards out to make your lotería deck.

EL PAPEL PICADO

Papel picado, which directly translated to “pecked paper,” is the name for strings of brightly colored tissue paper flags which have been cut to make patterns and images celebrating the holiday. They often adorn towns and homes for weeks surrounding many holidays, including Día de los Muertos. The tradition of cutting patterns into bark traces back hundreds of years to the Aztec Empire, but the modern iteration of this tradition started a bit more recently: a small town near Puebla called San Salvador Huixcolotla found itself in the middle of a trade route from China to Spain in the early 1900s. Tissue paper, which came to be called *papel china*, was discovered by some local Nahua artisans, who started creating beautiful patterns in the early 1900s. Want to make some yourself? Check out the links in our Resources section.

LA MARIPOSA MONARCA

Monarch butterflies – *mariposas monarcas* – migrate from Mexico to the United States. The time when they are found in central Mexico is right around harvest and Día de los Muertos. The butterflies are a symbol of the human spirit, and during Día de los Muertos they represent the souls visiting from the great beyond. The monarch butterfly is also a symbol of harvest season, because the butterflies arrive each year at harvest time. In fact, for the native Purépecha people, the monarch butterfly is called the “harvester butterfly.”

LAS CALACAS

Death is the great equalizer – skeletons are a metaphor in Mexican culture for death. They are not depicted as mournful or sad, but happy and celebratory. The afterlife is a joyous thing, and the holiday of Día de los Muertos is an excellent example of Mexican thinking around death: it is to be revered and celebrated, not feared or avoided. *Las calacas*, meaning “the skeletons,” are often depicted dancing and drinking and making merry.



LAS VELADORAS



LAS CALAVERITAS



EL PAPEL PICADO



EL PAN DE MUERTO



EL INCENSARIO



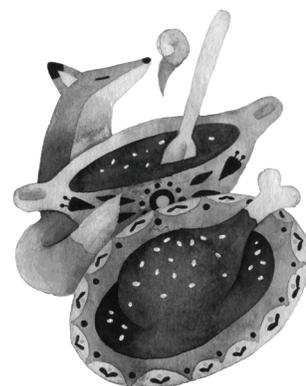
EL PANTEÓN



EL RETRATO



EL CHAMPURRADO



EL MOLE



LAS CALACAS



LOS CEMPASÚCHILES



LA CATRINA



LA MARIPOSA MONARCA



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA



LA OFRENDA



EL INCENSARIO



EL PANTEÓN



EL RETRATO



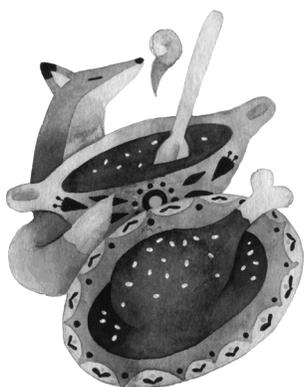
LA CATRINA



LA MARIPOSA MONARCA



LA OFRENDA



EL MOLE



LAS VELADORAS



EL PAPEL PICADO



EL PANTEÓN



LAS CALACAS



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA



LAS CALAVERITAS



EL RETRATO



EL CHAMPURRADO



LA CATRINA



EL MOLE



LA OFRENDA



LOS CEMPASÚCHILES



EL INCENSARIO



LAS VELADORAS



EL PANTEÓN



EL CHAMPURRADO



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA



EL RETRATO



LAS CALACAS



EL PAN DE MUERTO



LA MARIPOSA MONARCA



LA CATRINA



LAS CALAVERITAS



EL PAPEL PICADO



EL PAN DE MUERTO



LAS CALACAS



LA OFRENDA



EL PANTEÓN



LAS CALAVERITAS



LAS VELADORAS



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA



LOS CEMPASÚCHILES

Learn More



LAS CALACAS

Death is the great equalizer – skeletons are a metaphor in Mexican culture for death. They are not depicted as mournful or sad, but happy and celebratory. The afterlife is a joyous thing, and the holiday of Día de los Muertos is an excellent example of Mexican thinking around death: it is to be revered and celebrated, not feared or avoided. *Las calacas*, meaning “the skeletons,” are often depicted dancing and drinking and making merry.



LA CALABAZA EN TACHA

Calabaza en tacha, or candied pumpkin, is a traditional Día de los Muertos meal, made from pumpkin cooked with cinnamon, orange juice, and *piloncillo* (Mexican brown sugar, which usually comes in a cone shape).



EL INCENSARIO

Used in many religious events and masses, *el incensario* is a ceramic bowl used to burn herbs and incense such as *copal* (a fragrant tree sap). It is a tool of prayer and is also thought to cleanse a space of bad spirits, thoughts or vibes. It is also thought to help guide the souls of the dead home to visit the living.



LA MARIPOSA MONARCA

Monarch butterflies – *mariposas monarcas* – migrate from Mexico to the United States. The time when they are found in central Mexico is right around harvest and Día de los Muertos. The butterflies are a symbol of the human spirit, and during Día de los Muertos they represent the souls visiting from the great beyond. The monarch butterfly is also a symbol of harvest season, because the butterflies arrive each year at harvest time. In fact, for the native Purépecha people, the monarch butterfly is called the “harvester butterfly.”



EL MOLE

More chocolate! Different regions and seasons feature different types of *mole*, from *mole verde* made with green *pepitas* (pumpkin seeds) to *mole rojo* made with *guajillos*, *almendrado* made with almonds to *mole negro* and *mole poblano*, which are both made with chocolate. As with many Mexican foods, its origins trace back to the Aztecs. Called *mulli* (meaning “mix” or “sauce”) it was a dish reserved for special occasions, most often combined with turkey. The chocolate type of mole is a mainstay of Día de los Muertos festivities. Although there are as many mole recipes as there are families in Mexico, check the Resources list for a pretty standard mole recipe. It may take half a day to cook, but you will not be disappointed!



LA OFRENDA

La ofrenda, a word with the same origin as English “offering,” is an altar or oblation created to honor the spirits of the dead and celebrate their favorite things: from food and drink to trinkets and games. Portraits of ancestors are placed along with crucifixes, candles, *cempasúchil* flower petals, *papel picado*, images, and sometimes statues of saints.

The elements of the ofrenda usually represent the four elements: fire (candles), wind (*papel picado*), earth (food), and water. Most ofrendas provide water to quench the thirst of the spirits after their long journey, food to satiate their hunger, candles to light their way, sometimes a washbasin, soap, and a towel so that the spirit can clean up when they arrive. Other items that can be seen in ofrendas are mirrors (some will place portraits facing away but with a mirror in front of them, representing the idea that we may see the spirits of the dead only indirectly).



LAS CALAVERITAS

Calaveritas, the word translating directly to “little skulls” – have two meanings: small sugar skulls and poems. During the days and weeks leading up to Día de los Muertos, markets are filled with small skulls made from sugar poured into molds and then decorated with colorful frosting and brightly colored foil.

Literary calaveritas are also a part of the holiday festivities – these were short poems and stories, often with a satirical nature, ridiculing prominent political figures. Today, they are short poems, similar to an epitaph, poking humorous fun at characteristics of living friends and family as if they had already passed.



LA CATRINA

Wearing a fancy wide-brimmed hat, the skeleton woman known as La Catrina was a re-imagination of the Aztec goddess of death Mictecacíhuatl [mik-teh-ka-SEE-wah-tl]. The modern Doña Muerte was brought to life in the early 1900s by artist José Guadalupe Posada, a controversial political cartoonist who depicted fancy rich people as skeletons in a satirical way. Many Mexicans at the time had aspired to dress and look like European aristocrats, but Posada wanted to remind folks that no matter how rich or poor, no matter the color of your skin, and no matter what echelon of society you belong to, we all end up in the same place. As he put it: “death is democratic.”



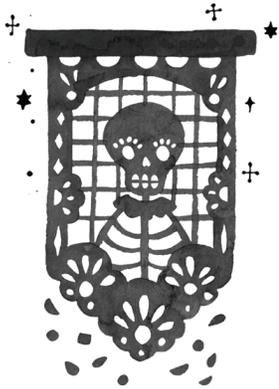
LOS CEMPASÚCHILES

Cempasúchiles [sem-pa-SOO-cheel-es], also sometimes called the Aztec marigold and well known as the *flor de muertos* (flower of the dead), grow in the wild in central and southern Mexico. The Aztecs used the flowers for medical and decorative purposes, and they are still used for everything from fabric dyes to culinary flourishes to medicine. The vibrant orange flowers are harvested and used each year to decorate gravestones and ofrendas during the celebration of Día de los Muertos – it is said that the spirits of the dead are attracted by the strong scent of the flowers (along with the incense and light from the candles). The word *cempasúchil* comes from the Nahuatl term for the flower *cempohualxochitl*, meaning "twenty flower" – most likely a reference to the many petals.



EL CHAMPURRADO

Champurrado is a type of *atole*, which is a drink made from corn *masa* (ground dried corn), *canela* (cinnamon), and *piloncillo* (brown sugar), served warm. *Champurrado* specifically is *atole* flavored with chocolate, and is a traditional beverage enjoyed on and around Día de los Muertos.



EL PAPEL PICADO

Papel picado, which directly translated to “pecked paper,” is the name for strings of brightly colored tissue paper flags which have been cut to make patterns and images celebrating the holiday. They often adorn towns and homes for weeks surrounding many holidays, including Día de los Muertos. The tradition of cutting patterns into bark traces back hundreds of years to the Aztec Empire, but the modern iteration of this tradition started a bit more recently: a small town near Puebla called San Salvador Huixcolotla found itself in the middle of a trade route from China to Spain in the early 1900s. Tissue paper, which came to be called *papel china*, was discovered by some local Nahua artisans, who started creating beautiful patterns in the early 1900s. Want to make some yourself? Check out the links in our Resources section.



EL PAN DE MUERTO

A type of sweet bread, baked into shapes resembling bones, wheels, and other symmetrical patterns, and sprinkled with sugar. They are used as offerings in ofrendas to the spirits of relatives who have passed – and of course, to be enjoyed by the living! If you’d like to try baking it, check out the recipe in our Resources section.



EL PANTEÓN

Communities gather across Mexico to clean and decorate their cemeteries. Los *panteones*, meaning tombs, catacombs, or mausoleums, are swept, washed, and decorated to the nines with *compasúchiles*, *veladoras* (votive candles), and *papel picado* in preparation for the holiday.



LAS VELADORAS

Las veladoras, or candles, are a big part of the holiday – the light and flame of which invite a soul back to celebrate with their living relatives. Families will place the candles both on their in-home *ofrenda* and at the cemetery near the graves of their deceased loved ones. The light from the candles is representative of hope and faith, and is intended to guide the souls back to the realm of the living. Placing a candle in a window at dusk means that you are thinking of your ancestors, inviting them home, and have faith that wherever they are, they are okay.



EL RETRATO

A necessary part of all Día de los Muertos festivities is *el retrato*: a portrait of a loved one who has passed. It is placed on the *ofrenda* amidst the person's favorite foods and belongings.

Read, Watch, Cook, and Create

Here are some more interactive resources to help you learn about Día de los Muertos and stay entertained for hours.

VE / WATCH

Short Film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCQnUuq-TEE>

Mariposa Monarca

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0t6mws2vgY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5gLrssiGoI&feature=emb_logo

<https://www.ket.org/program/wonders-of-mexico/day-of-the-dead-and-monarch-butterflies/>

Día de los Muertos Celebrations

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sSawpU81cI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1q0e2AN4V4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzWoSgPS3vw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz5ogMp8o0Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxXQL5qPZZ0>

Cempasúchiles en Pátzcuaro

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ73o0D8xfo>

LEE / READ

<https://coveteur.com/2018/11/01/day-of-the-dead-history-meaning-explained/>

<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/sociedad/que-significan-los-elementos-que-conforman-la-ofrenda-del-dia-de-muertos-0>

COCINA / COOK

Pan de Muerto

<https://www.mexicoinmykitchen.com/pan-de-muerto-mexican-bread-of-dead/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dl0pEmc4GdY&list=UUJjyyWFwUIOfKhb35WgCqVg>

<https://www.latimes.com/recipe/pan-de-muerto>

Champurrado

<https://dorastable.com/how-to-make-champurrado/>

Mole

<https://www.kitchenwrangler.com/2017/11/mole-poblano-dia-de-los-muertos/>

Read, Watch, Cook, and Create

Here are some more interactive resources to help you learn about Día de los Muertos and stay entertained for hours.

Calabaza en Tacha

<https://www.mexicoinmykitchen.com/calabaza-en-tacha-candied-pumpkin/>

CREA / CREATE

Make an Ofrenda

<https://remezcla.com/features/culture/how-to-build-your-own-altar-ofrenda/>

Make Papel Picado

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT6-5YFpujg>

Papel Picado Butterfly Pattern

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1jjHS2O-ek>

Make Papel Picado (aprende a hacerlo en español)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTSBz9LRt-E>

Make a Garland

<http://www.mamitalks.com/2013/10/dia-de-los-muertos-garland.html>

Make Candle Holders

<https://growingupbilingual.com/easy-glow-in-the-dark-day-of-the-dead-lanterns/>

Credits

We owe a huge thank you to our monthly patrons and one-time donors for helping make this collaboration possible! Thank you!



ILLUSTRATED BY ALAN MELELE

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY CAROLYN CUYKENDALL

EDITED & TRANSLATED BY NAYELI GARCI-CRESPO