

## **The Day of the Dead**

The Day of the Dead is a very special and profound holiday celebrated in Mexico and by people of Mexican heritage who live elsewhere. During this holiday, families remember and celebrate their dead loved ones. People decorate and clean their loved ones' graves and also construct altars in their homes.

The Day of the Dead is celebrated on multiple days from October 31 to November 2, which is the main day of the holiday. It is interesting that on November 1 children and babies who have died are celebrated first. This Day is called Children's Day or Day of the Little Angels. The children are celebrated as innocents who have a place of privilege in heaven. Some people also say the little angels come first because they are so excited to come and play.

The beautiful and colorful altars that people erect in cemeteries or in their homes are meant to attract the spirits of the dead. Altars often contain marigolds which attract the spirits with their fragrance as well as their color.

Altars may have the favorite foods and beverages that the loved ones enjoyed. Photos of the dead, trinkets, and toys are also common. People use this time to remember funny things their loved ones did and the altars are made to reflect the lost ones' personalities. The idea is that if the dead are reminded of how much fun they had in life, they will make the effort to come back for a visit.

An altar is likely to include skulls made of sugar or chocolate. These skulls are then decorated with bright colors and even glitter or feathers to reflect the colorful personalities of the dead. Families may decorate skulls for family members and friends who are still alive. After all, someday they will be joining the dead in the next world, and the skulls remind them that there will be a place reserved for them.