

**Научно-исследовательская работа по иностранному языку**

**( английский )**

**«The features of the “Dia de muertos”»**

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**THEME:** «The features of the “Dia de muertos”».

**AIM:** To understand how history of celebration is used in our days in some countries and different age groups.

**ACTUALITY:** Due to the lack of time people try to cut traditional ceremonies, rewrite and moderate them.

**HYPOTHESIS:** We lost the initial meanings of some traditions, mixing and cutting ceremonies because of great amount of mixed marriages.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 To study literature and Internet resources on the topic of the project.
- 2 To make a survey among teenagers and adults form different countries.
- 3 To analyze modern ceremonies of “Day of the dead” .
- 4 To prove or disprove our hypothesis.

**RESEARCH METHODS:** Data acquisition through journals, historical articles, old books and Internet resources, a survey, analysis.

## The Day of the Dead (Spanish: Día de Muertos)

It is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico, in particular the Central and South regions, and by people of Mexican heritage elsewhere. The multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died, and helping support their spiritual journey.

[1] In Mexican culture, death is viewed as a natural part of the human cycle.

Mexicans view it not as a day of sadness but as a day of celebration because their loved ones awake and celebrate with them. In 2008, the tradition was inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. .[1]

The holiday is sometimes called «Día de Muertos». It is particularly celebrated in Mexico where the day is a public holiday. Prior to Spanish colonization in the 16th century, the celebration took place at the beginning of summer. Gradually, it was associated with October 31, November 1, and November 2 to coincide with the Western Christian triduum of Allhallowtide: All Saints' Eve, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day. .[4] Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars called ofrendas, honoring the deceased using calaveras, aztec marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed, and visiting graves with these as gifts. Visitors also leave possessions of the deceased at the graves.

Scholars trace the origins of the modern Mexican holiday to indigenous observances dating back hundreds of years and to an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. It has become a national symbol and as such is taught (for educational purposes) in the nation's schools. Originally, the Day of the Dead as such was not celebrated in northern Mexico, where it was unknown until the 20th century because its indigenous people had different traditions. .[1]

In the early 21st century in northern Mexico, Día de Muertos is observed because the Mexican government made it a national holiday based on educational policies

from the 1960s; it has introduced this holiday as a unifying national tradition based on indigenous traditions.

Woman lighting copal incense at the cemetery during the "Alumbrada" vigil in San Andrés Mixquic Day of the Dead altars in Metepec.

The Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico developed from ancient traditions among its pre-Columbian cultures. Rituals celebrating the deaths of ancestors had been observed by these civilizations perhaps for as long as 2,500–3,000 years. The festival that developed into the modern Day of the Dead fell in the ninth month of the Aztec calendar, about the beginning of August, and was celebrated for an entire month. The festivities were dedicated to the goddess known as the "Lady of the Dead", corresponding to the modern La Calavera Catrina. .[4]

By the late 20th century in most regions of Mexico, practices had developed to honor dead children and infants on November 1, and to honor deceased adults on November 2. November 1 is generally referred to as Día de los Inocentes ("Day of the Innocents") but also as Día de los Angelitos ("Day of the Little Angels"); November 2 is referred to as Día de los Muertos or Día de los Difuntos ("Day of the Dead").[1]

In the 2015 James Bond film, *Spectre*, the opening sequence features a Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City. At the time, no such parade took place in Mexico City; one year later, due to the interest in the film and the government desire to promote the pre-Hispanic Mexican culture, the federal and local authorities decided to organize an actual "Día de Muertos" parade through Paseo de la Reforma and Centro Historico on October 29, 2016, which was attended by 250,000 people.

## **Beliefs**

Frances Ann Day summarizes the three-day celebration, the Day of the Dead: “On October 31, All Hallows Eve, the children make a children's altar to invite the angelitos (spirits of dead children) to come back for a visit. November 1 is All

Saints Day, and the adult spirits will come to visit. November 2 is All Souls Day, when families go to the cemetery to decorate the graves and tombs of their relatives. The three-day fiesta is filled with marigolds, the flowers of the dead; muertos (the bread of the dead); sugar skulls; cardboard skeletons; tissue paper decorations; fruit and nuts; incense, and other traditional foods and decorations.”

—Frances Ann Day, *Latina and Latino Voices in Literature*

### **Altars (ofrendas)**

People go to cemeteries to be with the souls of the departed and build private altars containing the favorite foods and beverages, as well as photos and memorabilia, of the departed. The intent is to encourage visits by the souls, so the souls will hear the prayers and the comments of the living directed to them. Celebrations can take a humorous tone, as celebrants remember funny events and anecdotes about the departed. Mexican marigold is the traditional flower used to honor the dead.

Plans for the day are made throughout the year, including gathering the goods to be offered to the dead. During the three-day period families usually clean and decorate graves; most visit the cemeteries where their loved ones are buried and decorate their graves with altars, which often include orange Mexican marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*). In modern Mexico the marigold is sometimes called *Flor de Muerto* (Flower of Dead). These flowers are thought to attract souls of the dead to the offerings. It is also believed the bright petals with a strong scent can guide the souls from cemeteries to their family homes. Toys are brought for dead children (*los angelitos*, or "the little angels"), and bottles of tequila, mezcal or pulque or jars of atole for adults. Families will also offer trinkets or the deceased's favorite candies on the grave. Some families have ofrendas in homes, usually with foods such as candied pumpkin, *pan de muerto* ("bread of dead"), and sugar skulls; and beverages such as atole. [17] The ofrendas are left out in the homes as a welcoming gesture for the deceased. Some people believe the spirits of the dead eat the "spiritual essence" of the ofrendas food, so though the celebrators eat the

food after the festivities, they believe it lacks nutritional value. Pillows and blankets are left out so the deceased can rest after their long journey. In some parts of Mexico, such as the towns of Mixquic, Pátzcuaro and Janitzio, people spend all night beside the graves of their relatives. In many places, people have picnics at the grave site, as well.

## **Food**

During Day of the Dead festivities, food is both eaten by living people and given to the spirits of their departed ancestors as ofrendas ("offerings"). Tamales are one of the most common dishes prepared for this day for both purposes. Pan de muerto and calaveras are associated specifically with Day of the Dead. Pan de muerto is a type of sweet roll shaped like a bun, topped with sugar, and often decorated with bone-shaped phalanges pieces. Calaveras, or sugar skulls, display colorful designs to represent the vitality and individual personality of the departed. In addition to food, drink is also important to the tradition of Day of the Dead. Historically, the main alcoholic drink was pulque while today families will commonly drink the favorite beverage of their deceased ancestors. Other drinks associated with the holiday are atole and champurrado, warm, thick, non-alcoholic masa drinks.

Jamaican iced tea is a popular herbal tea made of the flowers and leaves of the Jamaican hibiscus plant (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*), known as flor de Jamaica in Mexico. It is served cold and quite sweet with a lot of ice. The ruby-red beverage is called hibiscus tea in English-speaking countries and called agua de Jamaica (water of Jamaica) in Spanish. .[21]

## **Calaveras**

Those with a distinctive talent for writing sometimes create short poems, called calaveras literarias (skills literature), mocking epitaphs of friends, describing interesting habits and attitudes or funny anecdotes. This custom originated in the 18th or 19th century after a newspaper published a poem narrating a dream of a cemetery in the future, "and all of us were dead", proceeding to read the

tombstones. Newspapers dedicate calaveras to public figures, with cartoons of skeletons in the style of the famous calaveras of José Guadalupe Posada, a Mexican illustrator. Theatrical presentations of Don Juan Tenorio by José Zorrilla (1817–1893) are also traditional on this day. .[12]

### **Modern representations of La Catrina**

Posada created what might be his most famous print, he called the print La Calavera Catrina ("The Elegant Skull") as a parody of a Mexican upper-class female. Posada's intent with the image was to ridicule the others that would claim the cultural of the Europeans over the culture of the indigenous people. The image was a skeleton with a big floppy hat decorated with 2 big feathers and multiple flowers on the top of the hat. Posada's striking image of a costumed female with a skeleton face has become associated with the Day of the Dead, and Catrina figures often are a prominent part of modern Day of the Dead observances. .[15]

A common symbol of the holiday is the skull (in Spanish calavera), which celebrants represent in masks, called calacas (colloquial term for skeleton), and foods such as sugar or chocolate skulls, which are inscribed with the name of the recipient on the forehead. Sugar skulls can be given as gifts to both the living and the dead. Other holiday foods include pan de muerto, a sweet egg bread made in various shapes from plain rounds to skulls, often decorated with white frosting to look like twisted bones. .[7]

### **Local traditions**

The traditions and activities that take place in celebration of the Day of the Dead are not universal, often varying from town to town. For example, in the town of Pátzcuaro on the Lago de Pátzcuaro in Michoacán, the tradition is very different if the deceased is a child rather than an adult. On November 1 of the year after a child's death, the godparents set a table in the parents' home with sweets, fruits, pan de muerto, a cross, a rosary (used to ask the Virgin Mary to pray for them) and candles. This is meant to celebrate the child's life, in respect and appreciation for

the parents. There is also dancing with colorful costumes, often with skull-shaped masks and devil masks in the plaza or garden of the town. At midnight on November 2, the people light candles and ride winged boats called mariposas (butterflies) to Janitzio, an island in the middle of the lake where there is a cemetery, to honor and celebrate the lives of the dead there. .[6]

In contrast, the town of Ocoatepec, north of Cuernavaca in the State of Morelos, opens its doors to visitors in exchange for veladoras (small wax candles) to show respect for the recently deceased. In return the visitors receive tamales and atole. This is done only by the owners of the house where someone in the household has died in the previous year. Many people of the surrounding areas arrive early to eat for free and enjoy the elaborate altars set up to receive the visitors. .[14]

In some parts of the country (especially the cities, where in recent years other customs have been displaced) children in costumes roam the streets, knocking on people's doors for a calaverita, a small gift of candies or money; they also ask passersby for it. This relatively recent custom is similar to that of Halloween's trick-or-treating in the United States.

## **Americas**

### **Belize**

In Belize, Day of the Dead is practiced by people of the Yucatec Maya ethnicity. The celebration is known as Hanal Pixan which means "food for the souls" in their language. Altars are constructed and decorated with food, drinks, candies, and candles put on them. .[15] .[16]

### **Bolivia**

Día de las Ñatitas ("Day of the Skulls") is a festival celebrated in La Paz, Bolivia, on May 5. In pre-Columbian times indigenous Andeans had a tradition of sharing a day with the bones of their ancestors on the third year after burial. Today families keep only the skulls for such rituals. Traditionally, the skulls of family members



are kept at home to watch over the family and protect them during the year. On November 9, the family crowns the skulls with fresh flowers, sometimes also dressing them in various garments, and making offerings of cigarettes, coca leaves, alcohol, and various other items in thanks for the year's protection. The skulls are also sometimes taken to the central cemetery in La Paz for a special Mass and blessing.[16]

## **Brazil**

The Brazilian public holiday of Finados (Day of the Dead) is celebrated on November 2. Similar to other Day of the Dead celebrations, people go to cemeteries and churches with flowers and candles and offer prayers. The celebration is intended as a positive honoring of the dead. Memorializing the dead draws from indigenous, African and European Catholic origins. .[17] .[18]

## **Guatemala**

Guatemalan celebrations of the Day of the Dead, on November 1, are highlighted by the construction and flying of giant kites[29]. The Guatemalan people fly kites in beliefs that the kites help the spirits find their way back to Earth. A few kites have notes for the dead attached to the strings of the kites. The kites are used as a kind of telecommunication to heaven. [24] A big event also is the consumption of fiambre, which is made only for this day during the year. [24] In addition to the traditional visits to grave sites of ancestors, the tombs and graves are decorated with flowers, candles, and food for the dead. In a few towns the Guatemalans repair and repaint the cemetery with colorful colors to bring the cemetery to life. They fix things that have got damaged over the years or just simply need a touch up such as wooden grave cross markers. They also lay flower wreaths on the graves. Some families have picnics in the cemetery. [19]

## **Ecuador**

In Ecuador the Day of the Dead is observed to some extent by all parts of society, though it is especially important to the indigenous Kichwa peoples, who make up

an estimated quarter of the population. Indigena families gather together in the community cemetery with offerings of food for a day-long remembrance of their ancestors and lost loved ones. Ceremonial foods include colada morada, a spiced fruit porridge that derives its deep purple color from the Andean blackberry and purple maize. This is typically consumed with guagua de pan, a bread shaped like a swaddled infant, though variations include many pigs—the latter being traditional to the city of Loja. The bread, which is wheat flour-based today, but was made with masa in the pre-Columbian era, can be made savory with cheese inside or sweet with a filling of guava paste. These traditions have permeated mainstream society, as well, where food establishments add both colada morada and guagua de pan to their menus for the season. Many non-indigenous Ecuadorians visit the graves of the deceased, cleaning and bringing flowers, or preparing the traditional foods, too.[20]

## **Peru**

Usually people visit the cemetery and bring flowers to decorate the graves of dead relatives. Sometimes people play music at the cemetery.[19]

## **United States**

An ánima for the dead

Women with calaveras makeup celebrating Día de Muertos in the Mission District of San Francisco, California

In many U.S. communities with Mexican residents, Day of the Dead celebrations are very similar to those held in Mexico. In some of these communities, in states such as Texas,[32] New Mexico,[33] and Arizona,[34] the celebrations tend to be mostly traditional. The All Souls Procession has been an annual Tucson, Arizona event since 1990. The event combines elements of traditional Day of the Dead celebrations with those of pagan harvest festivals. People wearing masks carry signs honoring the dead and an urn in which people can place slips of paper with prayers on them to be burned.[35] Likewise, Old Town San Diego, California

annually hosts a traditional two-day celebration culminating in a candlelight procession to the historic El Campo Santo Cemetery.

The festival also is held annually at historic Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Sponsored by Forest Hills Educational Trust and the folkloric performance group La Piñata, the Day of the Dead festivities celebrate the cycle of life and death. People bring offerings of flowers, photos, mementos, and food for their departed loved ones, which they place at an elaborately and colorfully decorated altar. A program of traditional music and dance also accompanies the community event.

The Smithsonian Institution, in collaboration with the University of Texas at El Paso and Second Life, have created a Smithsonian Latino Virtual Museum and accompanying multimedia e-book: *Día de los Muertos: Day of the Dead*. The project's website contains some of the text and images which explain the origins of some of the customary core practices related to the Day of the Dead, such as the background beliefs and the *offrenda*. [21,22,23]

## **California**

### **A line of vendors**

Santa Ana, California is said to hold the "largest event in Southern California" honoring *Día de Muertos*, called the annual *Noche de Altares*, which began in 2002.[21] The celebration of the Day of the Dead in Santa Ana has grown to two large events with the creation of an event held at the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center for the first time on November 1, 2015.[22]

In other communities, interactions between Mexican traditions and American culture are resulting in celebrations in which Mexican traditions are being extended to make artistic or sometimes political statements. For example, in Los Angeles, California, the Self Help Graphics & Art Mexican-American cultural center presents an annual Day of the Dead celebration that includes both traditional and political elements.

Similar traditional and intercultural updating of Mexican celebrations are held in San Francisco. For example, the Galería de la Raza, SomArts Cultural Center, Mission Cultural Center, de Young Museum and altars at Garfield Square by the Marigold Project.[24] Oakland is home to Corazon Del Pueblo in the Fruitvale district. Corazon Del Pueblo has a shop offering handcrafted Mexican gifts and a museum devoted to Day of the Dead artifacts. Also, the Fruitvale district in Oakland serves as the hub of the Día de Muertos annual festival which occurs the last weekend of October. Here, a mix of several Mexican traditions come together with traditional Aztec dancers, regional Mexican music, and other Mexican artisans to celebrate the day.

## **Europe**

As part of a promotion by the Mexican embassy in Prague, Czech Republic, since the late 20th century, some local citizens join in a Mexican-style Day of the Dead. A theatre group produces events featuring masks, candles, and sugar skulls.[28]

## **Asia and Oceania**

Mexican-style Day of the Dead celebrations occur in major cities in Australia, Fiji, and Indonesia. Additionally, prominent celebrations are held in Wellington, New Zealand, complete with altars celebrating the deceased with flowers and gifts.[27] In the Philippines "Undás", "Araw ng mga Yumao" (Tagalog, Day of those who have died), coincides with the Roman Catholic's celebration of All Saint's Day and continues on to the following day of All Soul's Day. Filipinos traditionally observe this day by visiting the family dead to clean and repair their tombs. Offerings of prayers, flowers, candles,[28] and even food, while Chinese Filipinos additionally burn joss sticks and kim. Many also spend the day and ensuing night holding reunions at the cemetery, having feasts and merriment.

### **The results of the survey:**

1. Our survey was conducted among 27 teenagers, 12 adults of 35-45 age group and 19 adults of 60-65 age group.
2. Nearly all teenagers don't know the history of the day and meaning of ceremonial things.
3. More than half of the adults of 35-45 group confuse the 1 and 2 of November history, they do everything as usual but don't think "why".
4. All the people (both teenagers and adults) are sure that it is a great day and they like to celebrate it in different ways.
5. At the same time, in autumn, these days are celebrated in 17 countries.

### **Conclusion**

Having analyzed all the information we come to the conclusion that

1. Traditions of celebrating these days are changed in time by people of different countries.
2. It is a great family tradition.
3. Adults don't save the history of the day.
- 4 Most of families do the celebration as annual routine.

In conclusion, we highly recommend to study with teens traditions and the history of their countries and families.

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