

# DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Saturday, October 26, 2024

Recreation Park— 208 Park Ave, San Fernando, CA 91340



## ALTARS

Altar space sizes vary but will not exceed 10 x10 feet. Altars can be set-up on the ground or on tables. Canopies are allowed only in the designated canopy area. **Staking to the ground is not allowed.** Weights/water weights are permitted. Altars must not be left unattended at any time.

**All altar spaces are on a first come first serve basis.**



## SET-UP TIME

Set-up time begins at 7:00AM on Saturday, October 26 and must be completed by 10:00AM.



## ALTAR DECORATIONS

Participants must provide their own altar items (tables, table cloths, decorations, etc.). Battery operated candles are permitted.

**No flame candles or smoke producing items allowed.**



## ALTAR DISMANTLING

Dismantling begins at 4:00PM and must be completed by 6:00PM.

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The City of San Fernando is not responsible for lost or stolen items.  
For more information call (818) 898-1290.

# DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

## HOW DO PEOPLE CELEBRATE DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS?

People make altars to honor the dead. They use the flower cempaxochitl to decorate the altar along with objects that remind them of their loved one, candy, sugar skulls, fruits, vegetables, pictures, candles, water, incense, *pan de muerto*, music, *papel picado*, favorite foods, drinks and anything that would honor the person who is living the long life.



The levels of each ALTAR have a particular meaning.

Altars usually include elements according to age or stage of life, but some are specific to a person or direction.

# DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

## HOW DO PEOPLE CELEBRATE DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS?

### HOW TO BUILD AN ALTAR

If you have long sugar cane stalks, tie one to each of the back legs of the table and join them at the top (tie them together with string or use tape). Then, if you want, you can decorate the arch, attaching flowers to it. The arch represents the passage between life and death. If you can't get sugar cane stalks, get creative and make your arch out of other materials.

#### The base

Place boxes or crates on the table where you will build your altar in such a way that they create tiers so that the elements of the altar can be displayed attractively. Put a tablecloth over the table and boxes so that the boxes are hidden. Then place *papel picado* around the edge of the table and each layer.

#### Photo

Place a photo of the person to whom the altar is dedicated on the top level of the altar, in the center. If the altar is dedicated to more than one person, you can have several photos, or if your altar is not dedicated to anyone in particular, the photo can be omitted and it will be understood that your altar is in honor of all your ancestors.

### SYMBOLISM OF ELEMENTS

#### Memories (Recuerdos)

Pictures or objects of value that remind us of those who have gone on the "long life".

#### Candles (velas)

Both light the way for the dead to "find" us and symbolize the transition from the material world to the spirit world (a solid becoming a vapor). Candles represent light, faith and hope. The flame guides the spirits on their journey. Sometimes four or more candles are placed together to form a cross which represents the cardinal directions, so that the spirits can find their way.

#### Flowers

You can place flowers in vases or pull the petals out and scatter them over all the surfaces of the altar. If you use cempaxochitl (marigolds), the scent will be even stronger if you pull out the petals. The bright colors of the marigolds and their fragrance are synonymous with Day of the Dead. Fresh flowers remind us of the impermanence of life, which symbolize the quick transition from "beauty" to "nothingness".

#### Fruit, bread and food

Seasonal fruits and special bread called *pan de Muertos* are usually placed on the altar, along with other foods that the person enjoyed in life. Mexicans usually place tamales, mole and hot chocolate on the altar, but you can use whatever fruit and other food available to you. The food is a feast that is laid for the dead to enjoy. It is believed that they consume the scents and the essence of the food.

#### Water

Place a glass of water on the altar. Water is a source of life and represents purity. It quenches the thirst of the spirits. It represents "clarity" or "transparency" of life; also is among the four principal "elements" recognized by tradition.

#### Seeds (semillas)

Represents the relationships between death (the end of the fruit) and the beginning of life (the ability to sow life again).