

# The Day of the Dead

The Mexican culture has a different view of death and of those who have gone before us than we do. The departed not only continue to have a life on “the other side”, but they come back to visit their families and friends!

From October 31st thru November 2nd, about the same time we are celebrating Halloween, Mexicans are decorating home ofrendas (altars) and tending to cemeteries with masses of marigolds, foods and artifacts. They have laid a path of these bright flowers to guide their loved ones spirits back home for a visit. Their altars have been readied with photographs, candles, flowers, incense, and things they loved, like favorite foods, belongings, cigarettes and liquor.



Family altar at Chef Gerardo's house in Oaxaca



Young girls with their “Freida style” flowers.

It is a festive atmosphere throughout the country. I arrived a few days early in Mexico City to experience this and to visit some additional archaeological sites.



Every place you look in the hotel has Day of the Dead decor

Each floor of the Fontan Reforma hotel had been decorated with altars, skeletons and flowers; and as I walked around, I noticed girls wearing flowers in their hair "Freida style" in honor of the holiday; colorful flower-paintings adorning every street and throughout Avenue de la Reforma (one of the city's main streets) banners hanging from lightposts.

Flower carpet at the Palacio de Belles Artes in the historic center of Mexico City.





In some of the smaller, more traditional towns like lovely little Pomuch, the departed are interred underground for seven years. Then their grave-sites are opened, bones are cleaned, new linens are put in place then the bones are re-arranged and arranged artfully above ground, with a skull often peeking out so the family member can see what is going on in their community,



I was made aware I would be in Mexico during this holiday (thanks Karyn!) and I would love to return as there are parades and ceremonies in various parts of the city. It would be wonderful to spend time Oaxaca, a colonial town in central Mexico known for its "Day of the Dead" celebrations. It is a popular city and considered the artistic and handicraft epicenter of the country

November 2018