

Name _____ Date _____

Día de los Muertos/Day of the Dead

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b'

D\xc3\xada de los Muertos dates back thousands of years and is rooted in Aztec traditions. The Aztecs emphasized that death is a necessary part of life and that it should be celebrated, not mourned. According to Aztec mythology, when someone dies, they have to journey through nine levels to reach Mictl\xc3\xa1n, the final resting place. The main objective was to be with Mictlantecuhtli and Mictecacihuatl, the gods of the dead. The journey is said to be a challenging one, taking up to four years with obstacles along the way. Families of the deceased would offer food and water to help their loved ones on their long journey.

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Notes

2. b'

D\xc3\xada de los Muertos festivities unfold over two days on the first and second of November. Each day holds a different meaning for people who celebrate this holiday. It is said that on November 1st, sometimes called D\xc3\xada de los Angelitos, children who have passed come back to be reunited with their families. They are referred to as angelitos, or little angels. Some families write the names of their deceased children on sugar skulls. The following day, November 2nd, is designated for the souls of deceased adults to return and visit their families.

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Notes

3. b'

Notes

Ofrendas, or altars, are a significant part of Día de los Muertos and can be seen in homes and cemeteries. Ofrendas honor the dead and are often decorated with marigolds and calaveras, or skulls. The skulls are made out of sugar and designed with colorful paint. They are usually seen with big smiles. Because marigolds have a strong scent and brightly colored petals, people believe that they will help attract the spirits and guide them to their ofrendas. Families also place photos of their loved ones on the ofrendas along with water, food, candles, and other items that celebrate them.

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4. b'

Notes

Pan de muerto, or bread of the dead, is a popular pastry prepared for Día de los Muertos. It's placed on ofrendas, or altars, along with other foods, like tamales and mole, as a way to nourish the dead when they return to the land of the living. Pan de muerto is a sweet bread with a hint of citrus and is sprinkled with powdered sugar. It's enjoyed with a cup of hot chocolate or atole, a corn-based drink. The top of the loaf is often designed to look like bones and a skull.

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5. b'

Notes

Mexico isn't the only country that celebrates or honors the dead. In Japan, the Bon festival, or Obon, takes place every year to commemorate ancestors. It is believed that spirits come back to visit their families during Obon, which takes place during the seventh lunar month. In the Philippines, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, or Undas, are considered major holidays. Many Filipinos go back to their hometowns to celebrate Undas with their families. People attend mass and gather at cemeteries to be close to their loved ones. Many other countries also have holidays designated to remember family and friends who have passed, each with their own distinct traditions.

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