DÍA DE MUERTOS

Educator Resource Guide
Grades K - 12
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Dear Educator,

The mission of El Museo del Barrio is to present and preserve the art and culture of all Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans in the United States. Through its extensive collections, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public and educational programs, festivals and special events, El Museo educates its diverse publics in the richness of Caribbean and Latin American arts and cultural history.

The Day of the Dead, Día de Muertos, is a long-standing tradition at El Museo that engages pre-Columbian roots in ancient Mesoamerica, and connects them with the development of modern and contemporary art.

Visitors explore this important cultural celebration through museum visits, facilitated discussions with educators, gallery-guided talks and hands-on workshops, linking art-making experiences that are available on-site at the Museum and off-site at various partnering organizations.

We hope you will use the educational materials provided as a resource in different areas of study and to help prepare your students for a visit. To help you plan your lessons and units, we have included contextual information, extension activities, a glossary, and resources for further study.

We look forward for you to visit El Museo this season!

The Education Department
El Museo del Barrio
Part I. Día de Muertos: Traditions in Mexico

Origins of the Tradition

Día de Muertos, or the Day of the Dead rituals began thousands of years ago in the Valley of Mexico and in other regions in the area. The Olmec, Toltec and Mexica civilizations in Mexico, as well as the Maya, honor their dead. These Mesoamerican cultures retain skulls as remembrances of the deceased and keep them as tokens of their spirits. The Mexicas specifically believe in deities who symbolize and personify death. The deities adopt various manifestations, and in some cases appear to have animalistic features. Pre-Columbian effigies and drawings carved in stone exist after many thousands of years, visually illustrating accounts of these ancient personalities and beliefs.

There are many Mexicas stories that link the deities’ supernatural existence to the physical world of humans. These deities include Mictecacihuatl and Mictlantecuhtli; feminine and masculine gods from the underworld, who appeared on Earth as dark creatures with prominently featured skeletal bones. Mictecacihuatl is said to have died in childbirth, reflecting high infant mortality rates in pre-Columbian cultures. She is also known as the Lady of the Dead and corresponds to the modern Catrina figure, originally designed by the twentieth century Mexican printmaker José Guadalupe Posada. Of equal importance to life is the journey that the human spirit makes after death. Since many pre-Columbian cultures believe in an afterlife or the spirit’s existence after death, they believe body parts should be preserved and well cared for to permit further use. Mictecacihuatl and her partner Mictlantecuhtli were declared to be the protectors of the dead and of the underworld; the duo’s chief role was to oversee and ensure the safety of the bodily remains of the deceased. Multifarious deities provide insight into pre-Columbian notions of contrasts and balances. Where there is life and fertility, there is also death and decomposition. There is ultimately a great harmony in this cycle of life.

Often lasting over a month, the original celebrations of the dead took place during August in the Mexica calendar and were linked with the harvest season. It was in the post-Conquest era that the festivities were moved to early November. In an effort to convert Mexico’s indigenous populations to Christianity, Spanish missionaries retained certain elements of the pre-Columbian rituals, while linking them to the Christian observance of All Saints Day (November 1) and All Souls Day (November 2).

Cultures like the Taíno of the Antilles also participate in ancestor worship. In many cases, they bury their dead in the fetal position to mimic man’s development in the protection of the womb. Human beings left Earth and entered an alternate world in the same fashion that they entered this one. The Taíno people believe that brave shamans take journeys to connect with beings on the other side. A shaman fasts, purge and cleanse his body and performs a deep meditation to prepare his mind for a spiritual journey. The shamans often use potent herb hallucinogens to transport them on their expeditions in dangerous and carefully orchestrated rituals.
Contemporary Día de Muertos Celebrations in Mexico

Many pre-Columbian cultures celebrate the life-cycle and death in festive celebrations. Aspects of these ancient traditions continue to be observed through similar contemporary customs. Today, Día de Muertos celebrations take place throughout various regions of Mexico, including Mexico City, Oaxaca, Guerrero, among others. Though the rituals and customs vary from place to place, many common beliefs about death exist. Many believe that the departed spirits return to the world of the living during Día de Muertos. Some believers maintain that deceased ancestors participate in the peaceful celebration of the feast, whereas others suggest they return to perform tricks and pranks. Believers construct altars of different sizes in dedication to these spirits, to honor and to remember their departed loved ones.

Traditional Altars

The altar making tradition is said to derive from the statuesque forms of temples and their stepped pyramidal shape. Temples in Mexico were built high into the sky and could be seen for miles around. Often contemporary altars constructed in the home, the community, or in cemeteries reflect the forms and grandeur of the great temples. Smaller, mini-altars may be placed in a niche or a have a rounded archway or portal shape called el arco, which symbolizes the doorway between the worlds of the living and the dead. Larger altars in the community or cemeteries are generally elaborately decorated. Some have extremely large tri-colored arrangements of marigold flowers or zempazuchitl, the traditional flower of the Day of the Dead. The flower petals are often sprinkled in a path leading to the altar or place of dedication. The zempazuchitl is believed to entice the dead to the altars with their bright coloring and pungent scent. Similarly, altars also often incorporate copal: pine resin incense used by the Mexican. Like the scented path of flowers, the crisp scent of burning incense may also be used to guide the spirits to the altars. Also, while the candles burn brightly to guide the spirits, they symbolically represent the light of the spirits.

There are three distinct types of altars traditionally prepared for El Día de Muertos. Although the style of altars, decoration, and tone vary slightly through regions and different states in Mexico, the symbolism of the objects and items prepared for the altars are commonly shared. For example, altars prepared in Puebla may have a more festive tone with more playful ornamentation than altars in Guerrero, which are traditionally assembled with a more religious, serious or somber tone.

1. Traditionally, the first of the three altars is prepared for El Día de los Accidentados on October 31. It honors those that have died prematurely or whose lives have been cut short by an accidental death, disease or illness. It recognizes that these individuals have not fulfilled their full lives’ plans.

2. A second altar for the Niños is set up on November 1, marking the first official Día de Muertos feast day. November 1 is dedicated to infants and young children that have died at a very early age, to the Angelitos (little angels). Hence, the day of remembrance is called El Día de los Angelitos.
3. The last and final Día de Muertos feast day is observed on November 2. It honors the Adultos, adults and the elderly who have lived long and full lives. Unlike the Angelitos and the Accidentados, who have died prematurely, the adults have departed naturally and have maximized their time in this world.

The objects and foods given in honor of the dead are called ofrendas or offerings. Families frequently prepare an altar or a place at their table, where they set out the favorite foods of their beloved departed family members. Carefully prepared meals, beverages and personal items from daily life are all set out. The smell of their favorite foods is believed to guide the spirits to partake in this feast lovingly prepared for them. Ofrendas of toys, games, music, photographs or retratos (portraits) contextualize the lives once enjoyed by the dead. Adornments of flower chains and traditional papel picado (cut tissue paper) banners are joyful and decorative dedications. All of these ofrendas, have a significant and meaningful connection with the departed.

The introduction of Christianity into Mexican society shaped the development of Día de Muertos traditions. Though the deities of the dead and the practice of polytheism were discouraged, the church appropriated the Día de Muertos, pre-Columbian feast day. The church merged these pre-Christian traditions with the Christian feast days like All Saints’ Day, honoring Christian saints, and subsequently All Souls’ Day, honoring the laity or common people of the church. Today, in cemeteries and home altars, secular traditions merge with Christian religious practices. Along with tequila, papel picado and sugar skulls known as calaveras, traditional Christian symbols coexist, including votives, crosses and images of saints.

Additional Customs

In some parts of Mexico, there are street parades featuring people in colorful and intricate skeleton costumes dancing to lively music. These parades are reminiscent of early pre-Columbian processions. In the cemeteries there are special cleanings of the graves where the dead are buried. For Día de Muertos, elaborate flower arrangements are placed on tombs and there are special candlelight vigils that illuminate the area. During that time, people come together to sing and chant. These practices can take on festive or somber tones.

Among cultures through time and space, a common thread exists which is the concept of remembering those in our community who have passed. This universal practice of memorializing the dead is not always related to the Día de Muertos. Through a variety of customs, people remember close family, friends or ancestors, or pay homage to larger heroic figures in local, national or global communities. These dedications may take the form of more public displays like monuments, memorial services and community functions or more private and intimate remembrances. Through in-depth exploration of different cultures throughout history, we can discover and celebrate various perspectives on death and the cycle of life.
Part II. *Día de Muertos*: Celebrations in the United States

In the United States, *El Día de Muertos*, is predominantly celebrated in Texas and California, as well as Arizona and New Mexico. Proximity to Mexico as well as Mexican immigration has allowed for the migration of cultural traditions including *Día de Muertos*. Today, *Día de Muertos* is observed, interpreted and practiced by Mexicans, Latinos, and non-Latinos alike with the inclusion of religious and secular customs and new emerging contemporary art practices. Diasporas throughout different parts of the United States provide new interpretive lenses for this ancient feast, its origins and its varied customs. These practices are observed in traditional and unique contemporary ways. In these regions in the United States, Mexican and other Latino communities keep traditions alive by presenting candlelight vigils, altars, parades, performances, and other cultural programs.

In New York, *Día de Muertos* has flourished into mainstream currents. It is observed by churches, community-based organizations and museums. With Mexicans representing the third largest group of Latinos living in New York City, cultural institutions have been influenced by the changing demographics of their communities. This shift in demographics has also led to an exchange of rich Mexican folk art traditions. As a result, many organizations in the five boroughs have chosen to showcase related exhibitions, music, folklore and visual arts programs.

Programs hosted at El Museo del Barrio have been inspired by the local community of East Harlem’s Spanish-speaking *El Barrio*. As the Museum’s neighborhood grows and changes, the way the festival is celebrated continues to develop. El Museo has collaborated with local artists, folklorists, storytellers and musicians to provide a rich array of programs for students, teachers, families and adults. From lectures and cooking demonstrations to altar installations, art making activities and performances, El Museo’s programs seek to preserve traditional aspects of the *Día de Muertos* celebration while also encouraging contemporary interpretations by artists and community members. The sharing of these traditions and their modes of celebration enrich the lives of community residents and of those in the greater New York metropolitan area and beyond.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Christian European Tradition</th>
<th>Halloween 31-Oct</th>
<th>All Saints’ Day 1-Nov</th>
<th>All Souls’ Day 2-Nov</th>
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<tr>
<td>This pagan tradition is the remnant of an ancient Celtic festival called Samhain, which celebrated at the advent of the winter season. It was observed in Ireland, Scotland and England, originally on November 1, but was changed. It upheld that living and dead souls existed in parallel worlds, which intersected temporarily on this date. The living paid homage to the departed to support them in the journey through afterlife.</td>
<td>Introduce with the advent of Christian faith.</td>
<td>Introduce with the advent of Christian faith.</td>
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| European Christian Tradition | This day is also known as All Hallow’s Eve. Because it precedes All Saints’ Day and because of its theme of resurrection, Halloween is known as a day to recognize the rising of spirits. | Figures are sainted in the church for the miracles that have happened to them or that they have performed through their faith in God. Many saints suffered or were martyred. This day was set aside to venerate saints and honor their memory. | This feast day is observed on November 2 or the 3 of November if it falls on a Sunday. It began as a local feast celebration in 988 A.D. under St. Odilio, Abbot of Cluny, to honor saints. Its observance spread within the church over time. Later, Pope Benedict XV extended the tradition to honor faithful Christians. |

| Mexican Tradition: El Día de Muertos is a three-day period when the invisible dead return to and enjoy the practices of their former lives. Spanish missionaries used the indigenous tradition to emphasize Christian themes. | El Día de los Accidentados is the first Día de Muertos feast day. It is held on October 31 to honor those individuals that have grown up but passed on prematurely and have not been able to fulfill their lives’ ambitions. | This second feast day of Day of the Dead is known as El Día de los Angelitos. It was observed in the 9th month of the Mexico calendar and is dedicated to deceased infants. | Día de los Difuntos (All Souls’ Day/Día de los Adultos). This feast was observed in the 10th month of the Mexico calendar and is dedicated to deceased adults. This third and final Day of the Dead feast day honors adults that have lived long, complete lives. |
U.S. Tradition: The Chicano Movement of the 60's & 70's was inspired by Mexican imagery related to Día de Muertos, particularly the work of Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada.

While Halloween is celebrated widely, it has changed from the practice of All Hallows Eve. The holiday is marked by communal gatherings, parties, parades, costumes and trick-or-treating. However, El Día de Muertos, is celebrated in parts of the US, particularly in Texas and California, as well as Arizona and New Mexico.

Many Christians in the U.S. continue to observe All Saints Day, especially Catholics. Mass or services are often hosted with special prayers and blessings.

Many Christians in the U.S. recognize this date. Sometimes masses or church liturgies are offered, some performed in cemeteries. Some people visit the cemetery to honor the departed.

Part III. Preparing for Your Visit to El Museo del Barrio

Group Discussion: What do we know about Día de Muertos?

Use the following questions to gauge the group’s familiarity with Día de Muertos.

1. Has anyone ever heard of the Day of the Dead/Día de Muertos? What do you know about it?
2. Do you, or anyone you know, celebrate Día de Muertos? How do you celebrate?
3. How do you and your family remember loved ones who have passed away? How are your traditions similar or different to the practices in Ancient Mesoamerica?

Based on everyone’s answers, fill in unknown areas of information, explaining a brief history of the tradition, its pre-Columbian origins and aspects of contemporary Día de Muertos celebrations. You may wish to show Mexica glyphs, images showing daily Mexica life, deities of the dead, or folk art objects, such as papel picado and calacas, or skeleton figures.

Extension Activity

Ask students to research and write a brief report about the origins of Día de Muertos traditions and contemporary customs. Students may pick one symbol or ofrenda to research in-depth such as the Catrina figure, the use of copal, marigold flowers or papel picado. Ask students to share their findings with the class.
Part IV. Linking Día de Muertos Content with Your Visit to El Museo

El Museo del Barrio offers Día de Muertos themed programs, which explore the concepts of tradition, cultural history and remembrance. By using activities and discussions, Guided Tours and Hands-on Workshops provide multiple entry points into discovering the art and customs of the celebration.

Guided Tours focus on a series of altars and artworks made for El Museo, which contain traditional and topical elements, while Hands-on Workshops explore themes from the Guided Tour through art-making.

Post-Museum Visit

After visiting the museum with your students, follow up in the classroom about what students learned during the museum visit and what was most interesting and memorable. Write down
everyone’s responses about what they learned about the Día de Muertos celebration, its origins and early pre-Columbian traditions and contemporary manifestations. Use the following activities to continue the conversation!

Activity 1: Researching Cultural Perspectives on Death

Cultures throughout the world have rich and complex ways of honoring the dead and important figures in history. Examine different cultures and organized religious groups such as the Sumerians, Egyptians, Taino, Buddhists and Christians. Compare and contrast different cultures’ views of death, change and the transition of the body and spirit as well as how the dead are recognized, remembered and honored.

Altars and Memorials

People set up small altars or memorial sites to remember friends, family and loved ones. Altars can be placed anywhere – on the street or in the home – and can be as simple as candles lit in remembrance with photos. They can also be as elaborate as a traditional altar with flowers, food offerings of tamales, chicken with mole sauce, *pan de muerto* bread, as well as sweets, an array of beverages like *atole* and *ponche*, candles, incense and more.

Altars and memorials are set up in different ways for different reasons. Some of these purposes may include:

- Allowing the living to grieve.
- Keeping the messages or proverbial words of the deceased alive.
- Celebrating the work or accomplishments of the deceased.
- Commemorating historical events, military actions, etc.

Can you think of any other reasons? Where have you seen altars or memorial sites throughout New York City? Why do you think they were created?

Topics for further exploration

Gather more information on various types of altars and memorials that have been dedicated around the globe. Suggested topics for research include:

- How diverse cultures have commemorated contemporary or historical events.
- Diverse cultural, religious, or personal monuments which honor individuals.
• Compare and contrast the differing cultural responses to birth, death and the cycle of life.

Activity 2: Making Papel Picado

Papel Picado is the Mexican art of creating cut paper. Artists who produce this art use a hammer and chisel to punch designs out of large stacks of layered tissue paper. Its origins can be traced back to the Mexicas, who would use bark from mulberry and fig trees to create amatl, a rough paper that would be used in festivities and ceremonies.

The papel picado made especially for the Día de Muertos represents foods like pollo con mole (chicken and brown mole sauce), tamales, pumpkin, calabaza en tacha (candied squash), fruits or vegetables, as well as calaveras (skulls) and calacas (skeletons) engaging in everyday activities. Individual panels of different colors are strung together in banners to create festive and colorful decorations for the celebration.

The papel picado may be hung on walls, over doorways, or placed as ofrendas (offerings) on altars. The rustling of the paper indicates the arrival of the spirits on Día de Muertos. The delicate texture of the tissue paper reflects the ephemeral nature of life itself, thus banners used for Day of the Dead celebrations should not be preserved for the following year.

Using the steps below, make your own papel picado!

Materials

• 12” x 18” colored sheets of tissue paper (one per student)
• Scissors
• Colored string or yarn
• Liquid glue

Instructions

1. To make a simple papel picado, fold a rectangular sheet of colored tissue paper in half horizontally to create an 8” size panel.
2. Using a pencil, sketch one half of a design on the folded side of the tissue paper. Use rulers to divide the paper into sections. Designs must touch and connect to the other areas to form the shapes on the paper panels. Using a pencil, shade in the areas to be cut away.

3. With scissors or a craft knife, cut away the shaded areas of the design. Open the paper carefully. For more complex designs, fold the paper several times.

4. Once several banners are made, measure the string or yarn so that it extends beyond the length of the banners. Fold the top of the tissue paper panels over the string and glue or tape. Press the folded edges of the tissue paper panel firmly and wait until dry before hanging.

Activity 3: Creating a Communal Altar

Work together with your class, family or friends to create a communal altar in the classroom, at home or in your community. Choose a person to honor on the communal altar and bring in one or more objects that represent this person to place on the altar.

Preparing the altar

When preparing the altar, considering the following questions:

- Who will you dedicate the altar to? It could be an important person from local, national, or world history who has left a significant impact on you or your life. Consider including their photo or including some of their favorite objects.
- Where will you place the altar? Consider a quiet or more intimate space or a more visible and lively place.
- Will the altar be smaller and more intimate in scale and tone or will it be more prominent and noticeable on a grander scale?
- How will you stimulate the senses of taste, touch, smell and sight? You can incorporate the person’s favorite foods, flowers, incense, candles, calaveras, calacas and papel picado.
Extension Activity

Create an *ofrenda* (offering) to place on the altar by dedicating a note to the person you are honoring. Traditionally in Mexico on *Día de Muertos*, it is believed that the dead can see, read and use all of the same senses that they had when they were living. If they were here today, what would you tell them?
Part V. Additional Educational Resources

Glossary

- **Los Accidentados**
  An altar is set up for those who have died prematurely; their lives have been cut short by “accidental” death due to disease, illness, natural disaster, or other causes. El Día de los Accidentados is the first Day of the Dead feast day, observed on October 31.

- **Los Adultos**
  “The adults.” This name references the adults or elderly who have lived long and full lives. An altar is prepared in their honor on November 2, the last Day of the Dead.

- **Los Angelitos**
  “Little angels.” This name refers to infants and young children or niños who have passed on. An altar known as “el Altar para los Angelitos” is set up on November 1.

- **El Altar**
  The table or place where food, portraits, and offering items are placed to remember the dead. Altars come in various sizes and shapes and may be dedicated to one or more people or groups. Altars can be installed indoors or outdoors.

- **El Arco**
  The archway that signifies the doorway between the worlds of the living and of the dead. It is frequently placed over the altar or serves as a niche for smaller altars.

- **Atole**
  This strong beverage is tasted and placed on the altar for the dead. It is produced with flavored water, ground cornmeal, fruit, chocolate, chiles, and cinnamon.

- **Calabaza en Tacha**
  This candied squash or pumpkin dish created with brown sugar, orange juice, and cinnamon flavor, it is boiled and softened into a pulp form.

- **La Calaca**
  The skeleton, which signifies death and the souls of the departed. The calacas are often depicted in pictures or three dimensional sculptures or figurines. The skeletons often appear to be performing similar acts to those of living beings. Frequently, the calacas are depicted in joyous dance or playing music.

- **Las Calaveras**
  The skulls or calaveras de azúcar (sugar skulls) are made in various sizes and are placed on the altars, as well as prepared and eaten as treats during the feast. The skulls are a playful twist on death. Calaveras in a literary sense are also satirical poems that are written to poke fun of death and convey humor and irony.

- **La Catrina**
  The renowned ‘Lady of the Dead’ is known by numerous names, but Catrina is a satirical reference to a wealthy woman. Invented by artist Jose Guadalupe Posada, her large brimmed hat, wide grin, and elegant long skirt and blouse make her an easily recognizable feast symbol.
• **Copal**  
A strong pine resin incense which is traditionally burned to guide the departed to the altars by scent.

• **Mole**  
This thick, brown-colored sauce is put on some meals and food offerings, especially on cooked chicken. It has a rich taste and is made from herbs, spice, sesame seeds, chile peppers, and chocolate, and sometimes fruits like raisins.

• **Las Ofrendas**  
The offerings placed on the altar for the departed souls such as candles, flowers, pictures, messages, and foods.

• **El Pan de Muerto**  
Known as “bread of the dead”, this traditional food may have a sweet sugary taste or have layers of sesame seeds on top. It can be baked into a very simple form or can be shaped into more elaborate forms like tombs, small muertos, round loaves of bread with crosses, and various layers of rolled dough coated with icing or colorful granulated sugar.

• **Papel Picado**  
The delicate and colorful tissue paper that is cut in various shapes and sizes and is used as decoration for the feast. Imagery used for papel picado includes calaveras, calacas, Catrinas, flowers and birds. Its origins can be traced back to the Mexicans, who would use bark from mulberry and fig trees to create amatl, a rough paper that would be used in festivities and ceremonies. It is often hung on altars, and the rustling of the papel picado indicates the arrival of the spirits on Día de Muertos.

• **Ponche**  
A Mexican fruit punch that incorporates a variety of fresh fruits and juice. Fresh apples, oranges, pineapple, and other fruits are diced up and stirred in the punch cocktail. The drink may be served cold or warm. Rum alcohol may be added.

• **El Retrato**  
The portrait of the beloved departed is frequently placed on the altar as the visible presence of the dead. Photographs and hand drawn images often decorate the altar and serve as ofrendas for the dead.

• **Tamales**  
Popular tamale flavors include: mole (brown sauce), chile verde (green chile sauce), pollo (chicken), chorizo (pork), queso (cheese), carne (beef), or sweet. The main ingredients are mixed with cornmeal, pepper, cumin, and other seasonings that are molded into a paste and wrapped in a cornhusk that is later steamed.

• **Velas**  
The candles when lighted symbolize the souls of the departed. They also provide light to guide the dead souls to the altars prepared for them.

• **Zempazuchitl**  
The traditional marigold flower placed on the altar. Marigolds are yellow and orange and
have a pungent aroma, which is thought to guide the spirits to the altar.

Bibliography

**General Día de Muertos**


**Regional Traditions**


This beautiful bilingual resource conveys the nature of Day of the Dead as it is observed in Michoacán. The photographic illustrations of people, daily living, arts and crafts, and views of the cemeteries paint a vivid image of religious and non-religious traditions. Includes a section for food recipes.


**Activities and Lesson Plans: Arts, craft, and cooking recipes**


This informational book illustrates how to make *papel picado* from the simplest of forms to some of the most intricate designs, with a step-by-step activity section at the end to help readers launch into art
Family Ancestry


This book is suitable for children ages 4-8.

This book contains an informative section on Day of the Dead and various other Latin American and Caribbean celebrations.

Artists and Musicians


Art Institute of Chicago. Posada, Printmaker to the Mexican People. Chicago, 1944.


Sources: Palomar College Library, Center for Latin American Studies University of Arizona: www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/history/books.html, Dr. Kay Turner and Donna M. Podhayny, former Program Manager, Professional Development and Family Programs, El Museo del Barrio.
Annotated Webography

Ancient History in Mexico and Observance of Day of the Dead

http://www.tomzap.com/muertos.html
This website focuses on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, and its information on the Day of the Dead is concise, detailing its preparation and celebration traditions as well as providing a significant glossary on Mexica tradition, Linguistic patterns, and contemporary Mexican practices.

Artists and Musicians

Jose Guadalupe Posada:
http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/history/posada.html
Article with basic biographical information on Posada. Explains his artistic contributions to the popularization of Day of the Dead and role as ‘Father of Catrina’ and the calavera character imagery.

Corridos sin Fronteras:
http://www.corridos.org
The Smithsonian Institution Web Exhibition shares recordings of corridos from different time periods as well as interactive activities and lessons for educators.

Regional Traditions

www.dayofthedead.com
This illustrated website contains information about the celebration in the different regions of Mexico including, Oaxaca, Puebla and Morelos. It also includes regional recipes, poetry and photos.

Activities and Lesson Plans: Arts, Crafts, and Cooking Recipes

http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/cuaderno/diademuertos/sitio/intro.html
“Patrimonio Intangible,” A bilingual online resource on the customs, spaces, and objects of the Day of the Dead celebration as well as a description of a 2003 workshop based on the “intangible patrimony” of such traditions. A wealth of texts, stories, images, and videos are available on the history and continuing practice of the Day of the Dead.

www.pbs.org/foodancestors/
PBS documentary on the history, culinary background and cultural traditions, with a special focus on the foods commonly used during the celebration. Lesson plans are geared towards middle and high school students- highlighting History and Family/Consumer Science through food, arts, and videos.

www.mexicansugarskull.com
Site for purchasing Day of the Dead arts & crafts supplies. Includes sugar skull making instructions along with special instructions for teachers, and links to potential workshops and programs.

http://www.princetonol.com/groups/idad/lessons/middle/Lauren-Posada.htm
This site provides a printmaking activity based for middle schools on the art of Jose Posada while integrating contemporary subject matter.

Organizations Based in New York City

The following organizations based in New York City provide information and programs for Día de Muertos:

American Indian Community House
708 Broadway
8th Floor
New York, NY 10003
Tel. (212) 598-0100
Fax (212) 598-4909
http://www.aich.org/

Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders/Cultura Mexicana Sin Fronteras
64 Fulton Street, Suite 403
New York, NY 10038
Tel. (212) 587-3070
Email info@manoamano.us
http://www.manoamano.us/

Mexican Cultural Institute
27 East 39th Street, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel. (212) 217-6420
http://mciny.org/