
Day Of The Dead In Different Cultures

The origin of this celebration is not completely clear, it's most believed that it is the result of the combination of both Mesoamerican and Spanish cultures. During pre-Hispanic times, Aztecs, once a year, celebrated Mictecacihuatl, which was the goddess of the dead, this event was because it was believed that there was an afterlife. Nowadays there is historical record that this party was celebrated during the Colony, but there is nothing about between pre-Hispanic cultures and Day of the Dead, which leaves us with doubts of the origin of the celebration. That's why the most accepted theory of its origin is syncretism.

Day of the Dead it's not necessarily a sad celebration, rather a day to celebrate to deceased with family, and to remember them. It has to do more with an intimate gathering. According to Octavio Paz, this celebration has given identity to Mexicans because they have a very "special relationship with dead".

Day of the Dead has many variations along the country. For example in the Yucatan Peninsula, most exactly in Campeche, people have the tradition of opening the tombs and clean deceased clothes. In the capital and its surroundings the most common thing is to put an altar, either in the house or in the pantheon, also it's very common to decorate them with Cempasuchil flowers and sugar skulls. In the north, its get used to make competitions and expositions of altars, parades and dances about the Catrina, there also are gastronomical events during this celebrations, in this case of this part of the country it has more a social meaning. In Michoacan it's where the celebration borned, its main epicenter it's in Janitzio island, where the purepecha traditions were preserved, one particular tradition its that in some parts of the state, communities wake up in the morning to hunt ducks and eating them later. The elements that all variations have in common are that they use pictures and meals according to the pleasures of the persons.

Most Latin American countries have the tradition to visit pantheons, and make altars with elements in honor to deceased. There are some of them that go to the next level and make more than just an altar. For example, in Guatemala, communities fly kites, because it's supposed that by that way they would scare bad spirits. In Nicaragua, people have the tradition to sleep during the whole night next to the deceased tombs. In Peru, people give to their deceased a whole banquet of food, in order the spirit enjoys it during 24 hours.

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