



## Día de los Muertos Altar Contest



What: A Día de los Muertos celebration including an altar making competition. There are group and individual categories for the contest. There will be awards for first, second and third place in both categories as well as an awards ceremony.

Where: SUB Ballroom

When: Registration forms to be turned in to TLC 230 by  
October 25th, 2013

Altar set up – October 30 from 12:00pm to 3:30pm

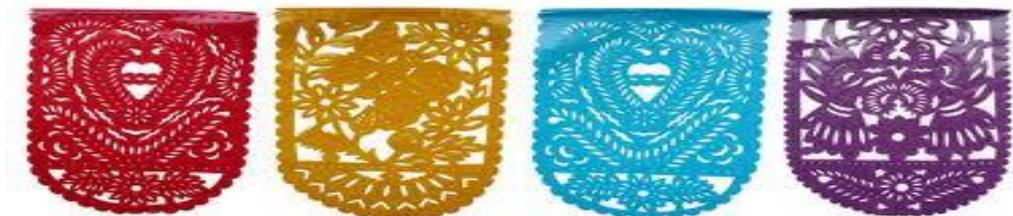
Judging will begin at 4pm

Viewing of the altars begins at 5pm

Who: All are welcome. You don't have to speak Spanish or know what Día de los Muertos is in order to participate in the altar contest. Take this opportunity to learn about a different culture and its unique traditions.

Questions?

Please contact Jamal Sanders at [jamals@uidaho.edu](mailto:jamals@uidaho.edu)



Day of the Dead is celebrated in Mexico on November 1st and 2nd. It's a time to remember deceased loved ones and honor them. Day of the Dead is a festive occasion and a time to celebrate, much like a family reunion. Making a Day of the Dead altar can be a way for you to honor the life of someone who was important to you, or remember your ancestors. There aren't strict rules about making an altar. Be creative and make something that looks attractive and is meaningful to you. The point of making an altar is to remember and honor lost loved ones.

### **Here's How:**

1. **The arch:** 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.
2. **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 (tissue paper with cut out designs) around the edge of the table and each layer.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Candles:** 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.
6. **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 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.
7. **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 foods are 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.

**Please remember:** The dimensions of the altar are limited to 3 feet wide, 2 feet deep and 2 feet tall. It can be flat or in-between these dimensions. Altars will be two altars to a table.

### Suggestions:

- Fraternities or sororities could dedicate altars to the founders or your organization. You can place pictures of them along with things that represent who they were. You could show pictures of their favorite pastimes, make their favorite food or display items that represent aspects of their life. i.e. paintbrushes if they were artistic or liked to paint.
- Be sure to make your altar colorful. This is a celebration of the dead and the wonderful lives they lived rather than a sorrowful event.
- You can write notes to the deceased. These can be sad but are always heartfelt.
- Please do not include any alcohol, tobacco or profanity in your altar. You may however include empty containers of tobacco or alcohol if the deceased liked a certain beverage or smoked.
- You can also include things that the person liked to use during their life like their favorite gum, favorite clothing brand or even their favorite soap. You can also display things that you think they might like (Imagine things that you would like to get in a care package)
- Be creative. Altars are meant to be personal so make it your own.



## Día de los Muertos Altar Contest Registration Form

Circle one:

Individual Category

Group Category

Name of individual or group: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Altars will be judged on the following criteria:

- ✓ Overall appearance
- ✓ Originality/Creativity
- ✓ Reference to traditions of Día de los Muertos (Please see attachment)

Please remember that altars can be no larger than 3 feet across, 2 feet deep and 2 feet tall. There will be two altars to a table.

**Please complete this form and return it to TLC 230 by October 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.**

Altars can be set up from 12-3:30pm in the SUB Ballroom on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Please check in with the volunteers in the ballroom when you arrive and make sure your altar is completed by 3:30pm so that the judges may view it.

*If your altar places please be prepared to give a brief description of your altar.*

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to seeing your altars!

Questions or to request additional registration forms, please contact Jamal Sanders at [jamals@uidaho.edu](mailto:jamals@uidaho.edu)