



# The Skeleton at the Feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico

*Elizabeth Carmichael, Chloë Sayer*

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All over Mexico, early in November, families gather to welcome the souls of the dead on their annual visit home. The smells of burning *copal* incense and pungent *cempasúchil* (marigolds) mingle with the aromas of fresh bread, new clothing, sweets, and candles. One of Mexico's most important festivals since prehispanic times, the Day of the Dead is an occasion for celebrating and feasting, cleaning and decorating graves, dancing and making music.

In this unique work, the authors explore both the historic origins of this holiday and its colorful present-day celebrations in Mexico and the United States. Interviews with Mexican artists and crafters who provide goods for the festival—from personalized sugar skulls to gigantic papier-mâché skeletons—offer a fascinating glimpse into traditional and contemporary attitudes toward death and the dead.

Lavishly illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, *The Skeleton at the Feast* will be required reading for all who are interested in Mexican culture, art, and folklore.

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