

## Celebrating “Day of the Dead” with the 12th Annual *CultureFest! Día de Los Muertos* at Penn Museum



Image: *CultureFest! Día de Los Muertos* features live dance performances. Photo: Raffi Berberian for the Penn Museum. Available for download [here](#).

PHILADELPHIA, September 26, 2023—In partnership with the [Mexican Cultural Center](#), and with the support of the [Mexican Consulate in Philadelphia](#), the 12th annual *CultureFest! Día de los Muertos* celebration at the Penn Museum will showcase Mexico’s vibrant traditions on Saturday, October 21, 2023, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Observed in Latino communities around the world, Día de los Muertos traces its roots back 3,000 years to pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, blending Indigenous Mexican beliefs with the Catholic celebrations of All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day.

The all-day festival includes an artisan market, make-and-take activities, and live performances:

- 11:05 am-11:20 am "Danza Los Jolos" (dance presentation)
- 11:40 am-12:15 pm "Guachinangos" (live music)
- 12:35 pm-12:55 pm "Kalpulli Kamaxtle Xiuhcoatl" (dance presentation)
- 1:15 pm-1:40 pm "Ballet Folklorico Yaretzi" (dance presentation)
- 2:00 pm-2:40 pm "Guachinangos" (live music)
- 3:00 pm Free samples of Pan De Muerto y Mexican hot Chocolate  
(Day of the Dead bread and Mexican hot chocolate)
- 3:20 pm Announcement of winners for community altar contest

A **monumental ofrenda**—a colorful, elaborate communal altar that honors those who have passed—will serve as the event's centerpiece. Artists Ignacio Bernal and Mauro Carrera will start more than a week in advance to assemble this massive installation focused on endangered species. The altar will feature objects related to and photographs of animals at risk—capturing the beauty and diversity of these creatures and highlighting their importance in the global ecosystem.

"It is a poignant and visually stunning tribute that blends cultural heritage with a strong message of environmental responsibility. It serves as a focal point for discussions and awareness campaigns about the importance of preserving our planet's biodiversity," says Ivette Compean Rodriguez, Executive Director of the Mexican Cultural Center. "Visitors are invited to reflect on the interconnectedness of all life and to pay their respects—not only to the departed, but also to the delicate web of life that surrounds us, emphasizing our responsibility to protect it."

**CultureFest! Día de los Muertos** invites individuals, organizations, universities, and companies to create their own ofrendas inside the Penn Museum for a **community altar contest**. Respecting the traditional Mexican format, all altars must be completed before the event. Anyone interested in participating in the contest can contact 215.845.5004 or email: [admin@mexicanculturalcenter.org](mailto:admin@mexicanculturalcenter.org).

"The Mexican Cultural Center is proud of our continued partnership with the Penn Museum, as it has always shown great respect for the Hispanic community—mindful of our traditions, arts, and diverse cultural manifestations—exactly what we are looking for when showcasing Mexico," adds Compean Rodriguez.

The Penn Museum's [Mexico and Central America Gallery](#) explores the stories of powerful ancient societies, including the Maya, Aztec, and Zapotec, while welcoming visitors to learn more about the traditions of people living in Mexico and Central America today.

All *CultureFest! Día de los Muertos* activities are included with Penn Museum admission, and the entire line-up can be found [here](#).

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#### **ABOUT THE [MEXICAN CULTURAL CENTER](#)**

The mission of the Mexican Cultural Center is to promote understanding and awareness of the cultural and artistic diversity of Mexico and its influence in the Delaware Valley. The MCC supports the cultural heritage of the Mexican community in Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, and Delaware and fosters understanding between our nations by promoting cultural expressions, art, and education.

#### **ABOUT THE PENN MUSEUM**

The Penn Museum's mission is to be a center for inquiry and the ongoing exploration of humanity for our University of Pennsylvania, regional, national, and global communities, following ethical standards and practices.

Through conducting research, stewarding collections, creating learning opportunities, sharing stories, and creating experiences that expand access to archaeology and anthropology, the Museum builds empathy and connections across diverse cultures.

The Penn Museum is open Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. The Café is open Tuesday-Thursday, 9:00 am-3:00 pm and Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am-2:00 pm. For information, visit [www.penn.museum](http://www.penn.museum), call [215.898.4000](tel:215.898.4000), or follow @PennMuseum on social media.