

Time of the Marigold: Study Guide



ABOUT THE SHOW

Explore the colorful traditions of Día de Muertos with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's *Time of the Marigold*. Featuring vivacious theatrical dance, movement, and music, this compelling performance guides audiences from native mesoamerican roots to the vivid, contemporary expressions of today. Along the way, meet unforgettable characters, like the elegant Catrina, and discover the meaning behind the marigold flower, ofrendas or altars, and other timeless elements that connect the living with the departed. Audiences of all ages will be immersed in heartfelt traditions of Mexico, embracing joy, whimsy and family above all.



ABOUT CALPULLI MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY

Founded in 2003, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company celebrates and explores Mexican and Mexican-American culture via dance including live music. Based in New York City, Calpulli produces professional performances via its international touring company, designs arts-in-education programming, and leads free community outreach activities.

The word calpulli (pronounced cawl-pool-lee) is an Aztec word that means "big house," "clan," and "family." We are a calpulli of dancers, musicians, and teachers that, as a non-profit organization, contributes to the city, country, and community we love.

Learn more at www.calpullidance.org



FACTS ABOUT MEXICO

Capital: Mexico City
Official Language: Spanish
Other Languages: 68 Indigenous languages
Two coastlines: Pacific and Atlantic



WHAT IS DIA DE MUERTOS?

Día de Muertos (*The Day of the Dead*) is a Mexican holiday dating all the way back to 1800 BC during which families welcome back the souls of their departed loved ones for a brief reunion that includes food, drink and celebration.

The Mexica calendar was shown to dedicate two months during the summer to dead remembrance festivities, however it was moved in colonial times by Spanish priests so that it coincided with the Christian holiday of All Hallows Eve, or **Día de Todos Santos**. Consequently, the holiday is celebrated during the first two days of November.



The 4 Elements of Día de Muertos



1. MAÍZ (CORN)

Corn was always a very important crop in Mexico, even during the holiday's origins in 1800 BC. Because of this, every altar or **ofrenda** has some element of maíz, whether it be ears of corn, tortillas, or tamales.

2. CEMPASÚCHITL (MARIGOLDS)

Marigolds, the flower of the dead, is used to guide departed loved ones back home. The cheerful, bright orange and yellow colors complement the festive ofrendas honoring family members.

In our show, the dancers hold marigold flowers while dancing "La Presumida," a traditional dance of the Huasteca region of Mexico.

3. FAMILY CONNECTIONS & THE OFRENDA

As part of the commemoration, people build altars in their homes to celebrate the lives of the deceased, and welcome their souls back for a brief reunion. These altars, known as **ofrendas**, hold candles, photos of departed loved ones, cempasúchil, maíz, and offerings such as the deceased's favorite foods, items, clothing or music. Oftentimes, the ofrenda is decorated with **papel picado**, a popular Mexican paper craft with intricate cut-out designs.



4. JOY

Día de los Muertos is a celebration! Communities across Mexico come together in town plazas to celebrate with dance, music, and food. We represent the joy through "Jarabe Nayarita" a traditional dance from Nayarit where dancers display their bravery and dance abilities by dancing with machetes used to harvest sugar cane.



POST SHOW ACTIVITY

It's time to make your very own ofrenda! Ask your parents about the ancestors and family members, including pets, that may no longer be with you. Honor their memories by collecting photos, drawing pictures, and gathering small items or foods to represent their spirit. Place these items on a small table or area in your home where you can see them.

This is your ofrenda!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 What is most memorable to you about the performance and why?
- 2 Did you learn anything new about the traditions of Día de Muertos that surprised you?
- 3 Did you see any of the **4 Elements** during the show? When did you see them? Which did you see most clearly?
- 4 How do you honor family and community members that are important to you? Are there any traditions of Día de Muertos that you'd like to adopt?

ART ACTIVITY

Check out

vimeo.com/calpullimexicandance/paperflower

to learn how to make your own decorative paper flowers!

