



Día de los Muertos Activity Kit

Free activities for the Museum's ["Fiesta at Home"](#) event
from 2-4 pm on Saturday, October 24, 2020

OVERVIEW:

Thank you for downloading the California Museum's Día de los Muertos Activity Kit! This free resource provides directions for crafts celebrating the Mexican cultural tradition of honoring loved ones at home in conjunction with our free virtual event "[Fiesta at Home](#)" on Saturday, October 24, 2020.

About *Día de los Muertos*

Día de los Muertos ("Day of the Dead") is a major holiday celebrated in Mexico and around the world on November 1st and 2nd. It is a holiday with rich traditions rooted in both Indigenous practices and Spanish customs.

Día de los Muertos is an opportunity to celebrate ancestors and family members who have passed away. At the heart of *Día de los Muertos* is the *ofrenda*, or altar. On the *ofrenda*, families place photos of relatives who are no longer living, along with items they cherished, foods they loved to eat, flowers, candles, and art representing the holiday.

In this activity guide, you will find three activities to put together to build your own *ofrenda*. First, you will make sweet *pan de muertos* to invite your loved ones to the altar. Then, you will make paper marigolds, to brighten the pathway to the *ofrenda*. Finally, you will create a tribute to the people you want to honor in your *ofrenda*.



A traditional *ofrenda* in Mexico



Activity 1:

Pan de Muertos

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Pan de Muertos, or “Bread of the Dead,” is given as an offering to honor the souls that have departed. While the varieties and shapes vary from region to region the bread lets those alive and those that have departed to feast!

APPROPRIATE FOR:

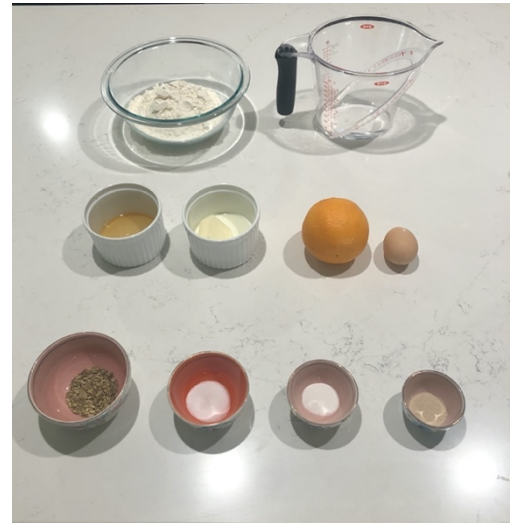
Ages 4 and up with adult participation

TIME:

1 hour, 30 minutes

MATERIALS:**Bread**

- 1 teaspoon dry yeast
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup warm water
- ¼ cup warmed milk and butter mixture (2 tablespoons butter melted and 2 tablespoons milk)
- 1-2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon whole anise seed or fennel
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon orange zest (~¼ orange)

**Glaze** (enough for 4-6 batches)

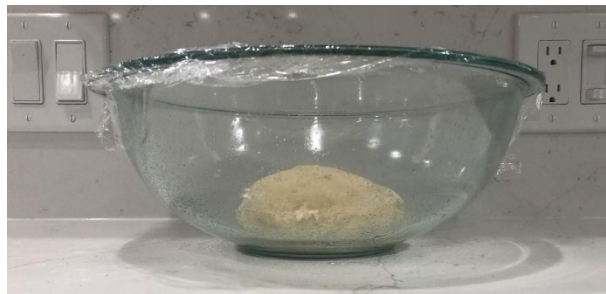
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups fresh orange juice
- ¼ cup orange zest (3-4 large oranges)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Put yeast, sugar and warm water in a cup, stir to dissolve, set aside to bubble.
2. Grate orange zest into a large bowl.
3. Add salt, fennel, honey, egg, and orange zest to the mixing bowl, Stir well.
4. Add milk/butter mixture. Stir well.
5. Add yeast mixture. Stir well
6. Add 1 ½ cup flour to the bowl. Mix until all parts are wet.
7. Dump on table and knead 5-10 minutes, adding flour as needed. Scrape table regularly to keep dough from sticking and building up on surface.
8. Knead until smooth, dry and elastic. Let dough rise in a warm place until doubled in size, from 10-90 minutes, depending on the temperature of the room.
9. Punch the dough down and shape into loaves resembling skulls, skeletons or round loaves with "bones" placed ornamentally around the top. To help the features stick to the loaves, tap a little water behind to act as a "glue" to help the dough stick together. Let these loaves rise for 1/2 hour.



10. Bake in a preheated 375° F degree oven for 15-25 minutes.
11. In a saucepan combine sugar, orange juice and lemon zest. Bring to a boil for 2 minutes, then apply to bread with a pastry brush as it comes out of the oven.
12. Remove from the oven and paint on glaze. Enjoy!





Activity 2: Paper Marigolds

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The marigold is one of the most recognized symbols of *Día de los Muertos*. It is used to guide the souls of the dead, thanks to its bright color and strong scent. Marigolds adorn *ofrendas* using their fragrance and their bright colors to attract the dead.

APPROPRIATE FOR:

Ages 4 and up with adult supervision

TIME:

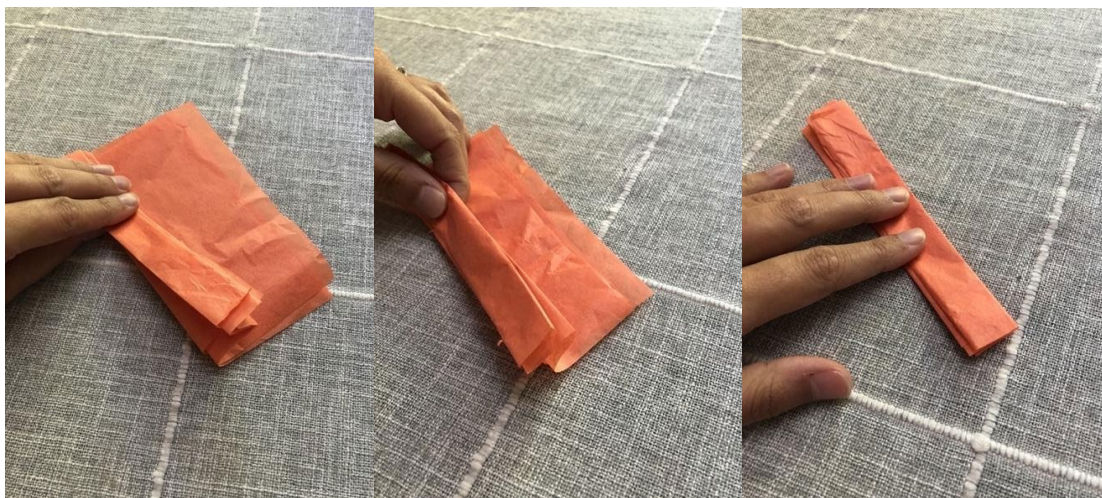
5 Minutes

MATERIALS

- Orange Tissue Paper
- Green Pipe Cleaners
- Scissors

**DIRECTIONS:**

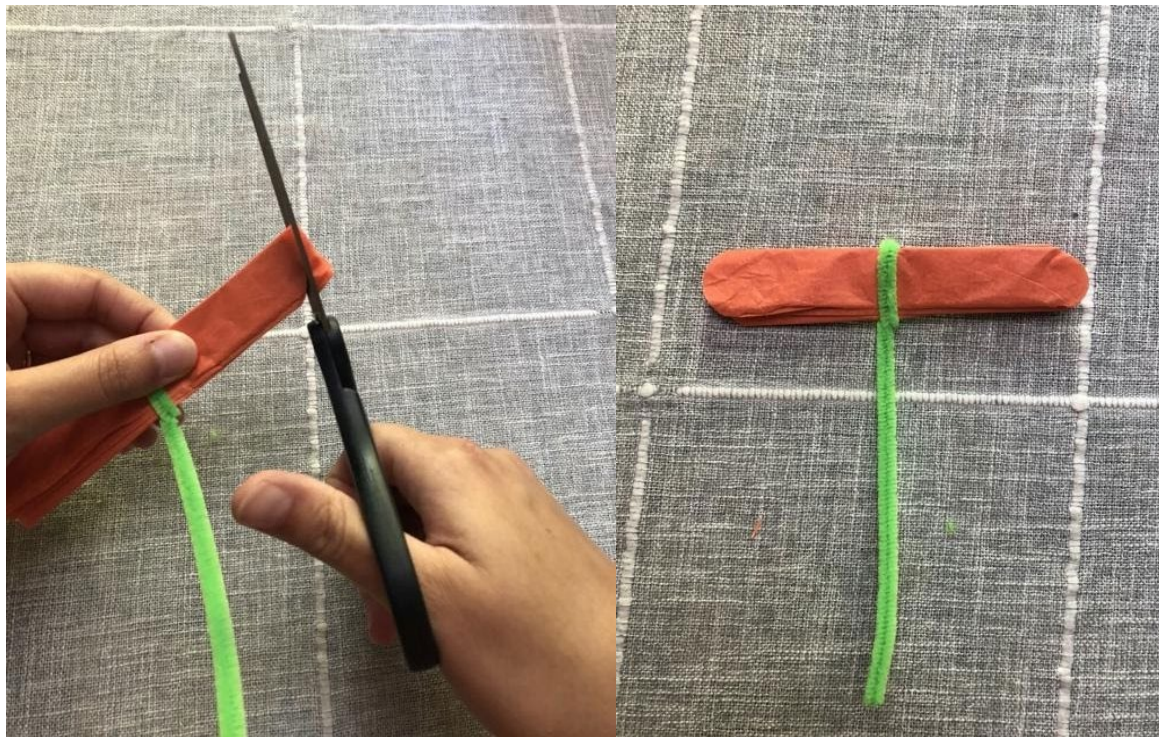
1. Pick out 4 pieces of tissue paper and layer them. Stacked together, fold the tissue paper back and forth (like an accordion) in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sections.



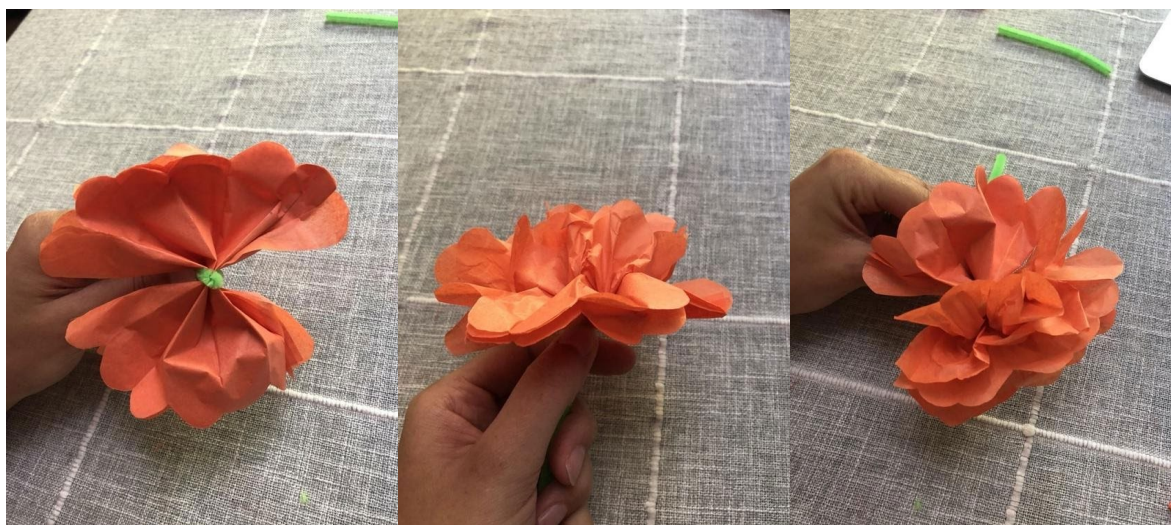
2. Once folded, secure the tissue paper by wrapping the pipe cleaner around the middle. This will be your "stem."



- Using the scissors, trim the edges of your tissue paper until the tips are rounded. These will be the “petals” of your flower



- Lift each piece of tissue paper at a time, separating it to point upwards.



- Continue until you have a large, fluffy flower. You can wear your marigold behind your ear or leave it as an offering on an *ofrenda*.



Activity 3: Ofrenda Tribute

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the heart of every *ofrenda* are photos and items that reflect family members and ancestors that who have passed away. All the items on the *ofrenda* are dedicated to these cherished people and their memories.

APPROPRIATE FOR:

Ages 4 and up with adult supervision

TIME:

30 minutes

MATERIALS

- Altar tribute template
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Tape or glue

DIRECTIONS:

1. Use the attached template to create a tribute to an honored loved one who has passed away. You can draw your own pictures, or make a collage using photos or other images memorializing them.
2. Color the panels with pens, colored pencils, markers, paint or glitter. Choose bright colors and colors that remind you of the person you are honoring to attract their spirit to the altar.
3. Fold sheet along dotted lines, and attach panel A to panel D using glue or staples.
4. Choose a special place in your home to construct your ofrenda. Find a table or shelf to decorate with your altar tribute, marigolds, and pan de Muertos. It's traditional to add favorite foods of your loved ones to invite their memory for the holiday. Additional items often included are candles to create a pathway for the spirits, a mirror to see themselves when they visit, as well as water to quench their thirst.

ATTATCH PANEL A TO PANEL D USING GLUE STICK OR TAPE

