

Ofrenda / Altar

An *Ofrenda* is an altar is built with levels referencing Catholic and indigenous beliefs.

Top Level = Heaven **Middle Level = Earth** **Lower Level = *Mictlan* (Aztec Underworld)**

They make the souls (*animas*) feel welcome and also represents the elements of

Fire = candles **Water = drinks** **Earth = Seeds and food** **Air = cut paper**

Papel picado / Paper banners
Intricate crepe paper cutouts represent the wind and fragility

Velas / Candles
Represent the element fire and attract the spirits to the altar

Comida / Food
Includes a deceased loved one's favorite items to eat & represents Earth

Pan de muerto / Bread for the dead
A sweet treat for the spirits. Design on top represents skull and crossbones.

La catrina / Catrina

A female skeleton figurine wearing a wide-brimmed hat and dress common for upper class Mexican women in the late 1800s. The style satirizes those who favored European culture over Mexican customs. Popularized in graphic images by artist Jose Guadalupe Posada.



Crucifijo y santos / Crucifix and Saints

Catholic images and representations of saints that have special meaning for the family are displayed along with candles and incense.

Fotos y otros objetos / Photos & possessions

Images & items of the deceased included to remember loved ones who have died.

Agua y otras bebidas / Water and other drinks

Quench the thirst of the spirits who travel to Earth for one day

Calavera / Skull

In the form of puppets, toys, candy made of sugar or little figurines acting out scenes of daily lives (working, marrying, singing). Skull art is a reminder of life's brevity and the inevitability of death

Cempasúchil / Orange marigolds
The color and aroma lure heavenly souls to Earth. Petals are sprinkled on the floor leading to the altar to guide the souls to it.

Icienso / Incense
Made of copal, which is pine resin, and used to communicate with the spirit world.

PURPLE
mourning

PINK
celebration

ORANGE
Sun

WHITE
Purity
& Hope

RED
Blood
of life

BLACK
Death