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Celebrate Día de los Muertos at Mesa Arts Center Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023



Image credit: Día de los Muertos Festival at Mesa Arts Center, 2022, photo by Slaven Gujic. Additional high-res images [here](#).

Mesa, AZ – The City of Mesa, Mesa Arts Center and the community are proud to celebrate the memories of departed loved ones with the 18th annual **Día de los Muertos Festival** on **Saturday, Oct. 21**, and **Sunday, Oct. 22**, from **10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

On Saturday, Oct. 21, **Vice Mayor Francisco Heredia** will kick off the free festival at 10 a.m. On Sunday, Oct. 22, the closing ceremony at 4:30 p.m. will include **Consul General of Mexico Jorge Mendoza Yescas**, **Councilmember Jenn Duff** and **Vice Mayor Francisco Heredia**.

The nationally recognized, award-winning free community festival offers nonstop **live entertainment** featuring mariachi music, folklorico dance and contemporary bands. **Hands-on artmaking activities** include Papier-mâché Sugar Skull workshops with alebrije artists Oscar Becerra Mora and Ruben Miguel Castillo Navarrete. Other festival highlights include **traditional face painting**, a wide **variety of food options**, and a **vibrant Mercado Marketplace** showcasing traditional and contemporary merchandise, jewelry and Mexican arts and crafts from local artisans and vendors. Mesa Arts Center's **Art Studios offers free glass and ceramics demonstrations** throughout the festival. **The Store**, an artist's cooperative and gallery, will also be open and selling Day of the Dead themed items.

In the spirit of traditional Día de los Muertos festivities, **a community altar designed by local artists Luis and Pilar Estrada of Estradas Artistry** is the centerpiece of the festival, where attendees can leave mementos in honor of their loved ones who have passed. Photographs are kept and replaced on the altar each year or can be collected by 5 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22. Additional installations include Mesa Arts Center's **alebrije sculpture, photobooths** and **tintamarresques** with augmented reality features by Mesa Youth Creative Agency, **School Residency Altars** created by local students and sponsored by Amazon and the **annual altar contest**.

The festival continues across Main St. at the Plaza at Mesa City Center again this year. See **altars by local artist Zarco Guerrero** and Tucson artist **Xochitl Avila, live muralists** curated by **Such and Champ Styles**, and participate in activities with **Arizona Museum of Natural History** and **MABEL. ASU's MiX Center** is also open for immersive experiences related to Día de los Muertos.

New this year is the **Relaxed Hour on Sunday, Oct. 22, from 9–10 a.m.** The hour provides a Día de los Muertos Festival experience that is welcoming, inclusive and comfortable for those with sensory sensitivities. The Relaxed Hour has fewer crowds, reduced lighting, less amplified sound, food allergy-friendly snacks and artmaking activities led by specialist artists with expertise in working with people with additional needs.

The festival will culminate in a performance and an open **procession to the Community Altar** led by Ballet Folklorico La Llorona at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22.

There is no charge to attend the Día de los Muertos Festival, and parking is free. Mesa Arts Center is located at One East Main Street in downtown Mesa. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.

Amazon is the Presenting Sponsor of the Día de los Muertos Festival. Additional festival support is provided by SRP, AT&T Fiber, Celerion, Primavera Online School, Larry H.

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About Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions and outstanding arts education classes. Mesa Arts Center's mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible and relevant. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.

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