



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Día de los Muertos at Cheekwood: A Celebration of Life and Remembrance

26th Annual Festival Brings Traditions of Mexico and Latin America to Nashville

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – El Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, returns to Cheekwood Estate & Gardens with the vibrant sights, sounds and flavors of the Latin American holiday when families celebrate the souls of deceased relatives.

Guests can learn about the culture of Mexico and Latin America while visiting community altars, viewing large-scale murals created by area middle and high school students, sampling authentic cuisine from local restaurants and bakers, shopping for traditional goods, enjoying hands-on activities for kids, and experiencing a variety of dance and musical performances.

El Día de los Muertos will be held November 1 and 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are on sale now at cheekwood.org.

The Day of the Dead is one of the most important celebrations in Mexico and Latin America and demonstrates the culture's strong sense of love and respect for ancestors while celebrating the continuance of life.

Cheekwood's celebration started in 2000, in recognition of the growing Hispanic community in Nashville. Throughout the history of the event, Cheekwood has collaborated with an Advisory Committee featuring members of the Hispanic community to ensure the event is respectful and authentic.

"Day of the Dead at Cheekwood is a celebration that provides an opportunity to learn, appreciate and experience a part of the Mexican cultural traditions," said Arcelia Vázquez, a member of the Advisory Committee for El Día de Los Muertos at Cheekwood. "This celebration focuses on family and community in welcoming back, for a brief reunion, the souls of ancestors and loved ones who have passed away, emphasizing intangible aspects such as love, remembrance, and honoring loved ones through memories. We invite you to join us in participating in this meaningful and enriching experience."

Altars

One of the most important aspects of El Día de los Muertos is the creation of a memorial altar for the departed, known as an *ofrenda*. Across Mexico and beyond, families honor their ancestors by creating altars decorated with items that the deceased enjoyed in life. Guests can learn more about this tradition as they tour the creative *ofrendas* inside Massey Auditorium designed by local groups and organizations.

Entertainment

Saturday, November 1 | Arboretum Lawn

10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Guadalupeana
10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. – Dance Performance by Grupo Folklórico Raíces de mi Tierra
12 p.m. – 12:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Guadalupeana
12:30 p.m. – 1 p.m. – Dance Performance by Mi Cielito Lindo
2 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Guadalupeana
2:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. – Dance Performance by Mi Cielito Lindo
4 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Guadalupeana

Saturday, November 1 | Beer Garden

9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. – DJ
10:30 a.m. – Musical Performance by Sofia Rhiannon and Gabriella Flores
11:30 a.m. – Musical Performance by Rachel Rodriguez and the Gringo Starrz
12:30 p.m. – Musical Performance by Duo Sudeste
1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. – DJ

Sunday, November 2 | Arboretum Lawn

10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Ollin Quetzalli
10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. – Dance Performance by Lirios Folklóricos
12 p.m. – 12:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Ollin Quetzalli
12:30 p.m. – 1 p.m. – Dance Performance by Folklore Iyali
2 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Ollin Quetzalli
2:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. – Dance Performance by Folklore Iyali
4 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. – Dance Performance by Danza Azteca Ollin Quetzalli

Sunday, November 2 | Beer Garden

9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – DJ
10:30 a.m. – Musical Performance by Rosa Rodriguez
11:30 a.m. – DJ
12:30 p.m. – Musical Performance by San Rafael Band
1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. – DJ

Art and Activities

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard

Marigold Flower Crowns

Flowers, which symbolize the brevity of life, are an essential element of Day of the Dead celebrations, but none more than the marigold or *cempasúchil*. In addition to decorative uses, marigolds are believed to attract the souls of the dead to the altars prepared for them. Guests can create their own paper marigolds and affix them on a headband to wear throughout the day.

Monarch Butterflies

Monarch butterflies are a powerful symbol during El Día de los Muertos because their annual migration to Mexico typically coincides with the holiday, leading to the long-held belief that the butterflies are the spirits of deceased loved ones returning to visit. To continue this connection between the living and dead, guests can create their own monarchs to honor a returning loved one.

Papel Picado Coloring Sheet

Papel picado is a traditional Mexican folk art that involves cutting intricate designs into tissue paper or other thin materials to create banners, flags or decorations. These items are often used to decorate streets, homes, and memorial altars during holidays and celebrations. Learn about some of the important symbols and imagery associated with El Día de los Muertos through miniature coloring sheets and string multiple together to create your own strand of colorful *Papel picado*.

Memory Tree

Honor the reason for El Día de los Muertos by writing the name or memory of a loved one on a colorful slip of paper and adding it to the memory tree in Massey Auditorium.

Photo opportunity with Catrina & Catrin Puppets

Stunning skeleton puppets set up inside the Frist Learning Center Great Hall provide the perfect backdrop for a memorable photo and memento of the event. *La Catrina*, a figure made famous by artist José Guadalupe Posada, is synonymous with El Día de los Muertos.

Murals

Murals depicting the Day of the Dead have a strong history throughout Latin America, highlighted by the works of Diego Rivera and José Guadalupe Posada, the creator of the

iconic *La Catrina* figure. Students from local middle and high schools will draw inspiration from these artists and create large-scale works which will be on display in the Frist Learning Center Great Hall.

Art and Food Vendors

Colorful open-air markets line the streets of Latin America during El Día de los Muertos, as local merchants sell food, flowers, art, and handmade items which people buy to decorate their altars and tombs. Cheekwood will recreate that scene with a wide variety of vendors featuring art, jewelry, gift items, and traditional foods from local restaurants and bakeries.

Ticket Information

The event is free for Cheekwood members and all children ages two and under. For not-yet members, tickets cost \$23 for adults and \$16 for youth (3-17). All tickets include access to the Historic Mansion & Museum. Reserve tickets now at cheekwood.org. Reserving a timed-entry ticket in advance is required for all guests. During busy seasons and events, Cheekwood may reach parking capacity. If parking capacity is reached, walk-up tickets will only be available for those utilizing rideshare services.

El Día de los Muertos is sponsored by HCA and supported by Nissan Foundation and Asurion.

About Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a three-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden, in 2024 and 2025 received a Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award, and in 2021 was named by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation

depending on the season. Visit cheekwood.org for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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Images for Media

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/66fffe9891652ff4eb87a7a7>

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