main and more deeply rooted tradition around this time is **Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)**, celebrated on **November 1st and 2nd**. It’s one of the most iconic and meaningful Mexican traditions, blending **indigenous beliefs** with **Catholic customs** brought by the Spanish.

* **Modern influence:** Halloween has become more popular in urban areas due to U.S. cultural influence.
* **Children’s activities:** Kids dress up in costumes — both spooky (ghosts, skeletons, witches) and fun (cartoon characters, superheroes).
* **Trick-or-treating:** Known as *“pedir calaverita”* (asking for little skulls). Children go door-to-door saying *“¿Me da mi calaverita?”*, and receive candy or coins.
* **Decorations:** Some homes and stores put up pumpkins, bats, and spider webs, similar to U.S. Halloween decor.

**💀 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead — Nov 1 & 2)**

* **Purpose:** A time to honor and remember deceased loved ones, welcoming their spirits back for a visit.
* **Dates:**
  + **Nov 1:** *Día de los Angelitos* — honors deceased children.
  + **Nov 2:** *Día de los Difuntos* or *Día de los Muertos* — honors deceased adults.

 **Ofrendas (Altars):**

* Built at home or in cemeteries.
* Decorated with candles, flowers (*cempasúchil* — marigolds), photos, food, and items the deceased loved.
* Offerings often include *pan de muerto* (sweet bread), sugar skulls, and drinks like tequila or atole.

 **Cemeteries:**

* Families clean and decorate graves with candles and flowers.
* They may picnic, play music, and share stories about their loved ones — turning the cemetery into a celebration of life.

 **Cempasúchil (Marigold Flowers):**

* Called the “flower of the dead.”
* Believed to guide spirits to their altars with their bright color and scent.

 **Sugar Skulls (Calaveras de Azúcar):**

* Decorated with colorful icing, sometimes inscribed with names.
* Symbolize the sweetness and vitality of life.

 **Pan de Muerto (Bread of the Dead):**

* A special sweet bread often flavored with orange blossom or anise, topped with sugar and shaped to represent bones.

 **La Catrina:**

* The elegant female skeleton figure created by José Guadalupe Posada.
* A national symbol of Día de los Muertos — represents that death is a natural, even humorous, part of life.

Everyone got ready for Día de los Muertos in the little town of San Felipe del Monte, where the marigolds glowed like embers and the mountains obscured the moon. The petals of cempasúchils shimmered in the streets, beckoning the deceased back to their homes. However, not every spirit was accepted. Marisol lived on the outskirts of town with her abuela, who taught her the sacred rituals, such as placing each picture on the altar, lighting candles, and whispering the names of the deceased to help them find their way back. Abuela would always say, "Every soul must have its light." "The spirit loses its path when a candle goes out." Abuela passed away in late October of that year. Marisol constructed her first altar by herself. Marisol struck the match as it reached out. Every candle suddenly blazed with fire as the spark burst, bright as dawn. She briefly caught a glimpse of Abuela's gentle eyes behind the flames as the marigold petals rose in a golden swirl. Abuela's voice murmured, "Remember." "Even lost souls look for light." Then there was silence in the room. The wind slowed. There was no longer a shadow. In the morning, Marisol discovered a fresh picture of a young man she had never seen before standing next to a field of marigolds on the altar. A name had written in faded ink beneath it: "Miguel, 1887." She never removed it. She lit an additional candle each year after that in remembrance of the forgotten people who were still trying to find their way home.