



Creative Retreat for the Days of the Dead

G26100401

with Helen Byers

October 27 – November 2, 2026

Hello!

Thank you for your interest in my Creative Retreat for Days of the Dead (*Días de los Muertos*). Below is more information about it.

2026 is my 22nd year of teaching creative arts at Ghost Ranch, and the 6th year I have the pleasure of offering this course. I can't think of a more perfect place to offer it than Casa del Sol—the historic adobe house near Georgia O'Keeffe's summer home, below the pastel-colored cliffs she often painted. The views of land and sky, in all directions across the desert landscape, can't be beat. The peace and beauty of this spot are perfectly suited to a workshop devoted to in-depth observance of an ancient Latin American cultural tradition. We will share craft-making, thoughtful discussion, laughter, and storytelling, in communal and private remembrance of loved ones.

This course fosters camaraderie. There is a courtyard with a fire pit and view to Cerro Pedernal, O'Keeffe's favorite mountain. The house includes a living room and full kitchen, stocked with basic food staples, plus coffee and tea. All meals are included in your registration fee and offered in the Dining Hall, on the main campus of the Ranch. (There will be no shuttle service back & forth for meals, but we can carpool.)

I will provide all necessary tools and materials for the traditional crafts we'll make. Each person will have an outdoor table (under the portal of the courtyard) or a deep indoor windowsill on which to create their memorial *ofrenda*, or "altar."



I invite you to bring personal mementos to decorate your *ofrenda* (photographs, plus a few other items representing the departed person's interests: a favorite souvenir, or a book, tool, hat, harmonica, deck of cards, baseball glove...?). You may also want to bring votive candles and fresh or paper marigolds (the traditional flower associated with Days of the Dead). (Fresh marigolds may be available at a grocery store, such as Trader Joe's in Santa Fe; you might find paper ones in a shop near the Santa Fe Plaza.) I will also bring a pumpkin to carve, and face paint to use, if anyone wishes, on Halloween.

Mornings and evenings during these fall days can be at least 30°F cooler than daytime temperatures, so bring clothing layers, and sturdy shoes for walking or hiking on the Ranch's roads and trails. (Bring a rain jacket, too, just in case.) A water bottle, sun hat and sunglasses, are essential, and a small backpack is handy. Don't forget your camera (or cell phone)!

To see how much fun we'll have, check out the Days of the Dead slideshow on my website and my Facebook page. I look forward to sharing this special time with you!

Helen

Daily Schedule for the Week

Tuesday, October 27:

- 3:00 PM: Check-in at the Welcome Center (There you will receive your room assignment, directions to Casa del Sol, and more information about the Ranch.)
- 5:30-6:30 PM: Dinner (at Dining Hall), followed by Orientation

Wednesday, Oct 28–Sunday, Nov 1:

- 7:30-8:30 AM: Breakfast (Make your own at Casa del Sol or carpool to Dining Hall)
- 9:00-10:00 AM: Instruction & discussion
- 10:00 AM-Noon: Crafts



- Noon-1:30 PM: Lunch (at Dining Hall)
- 1:30-5:30 PM: Free time to continue making crafts, explore the Ranch, or visit nearby sites
- 5:30-6:30 PM: Dinner (at Dining Hall)
- 7:00-8:30 PM: Evening activities

Monday, Nov 2:

- 7:30-8:30 AM: Breakfast
- 10:00 am: Check-out time