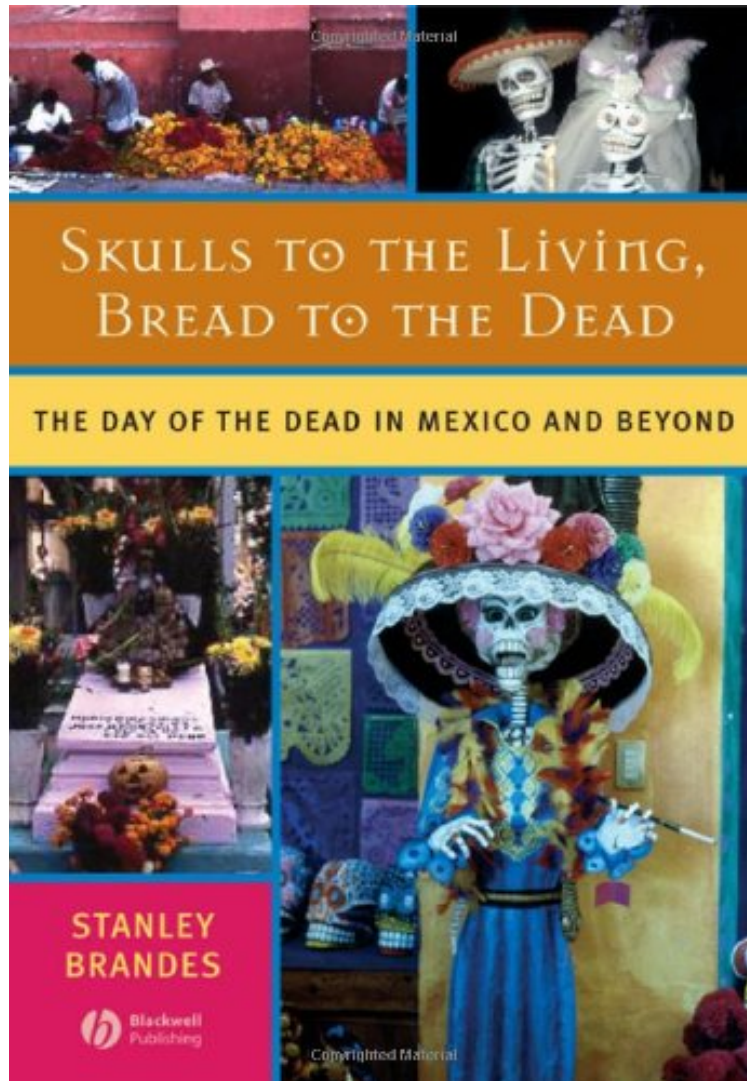


(Ebook pdf) Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead: The Day of the Dead in Mexico and Beyond

Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead: The Day of the Dead in Mexico and Beyond

Stanley Brandes

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Each October, as the Day of the Dead draws near, Mexican markets overflow with decorated breads, fanciful paper cutouts, and whimsical toy skulls and skeletons. To honor deceased relatives, Mexicans decorate graves and erect home altars. Drawing on a rich array of historical and ethnographic evidence, this volume reveals the origin and changing character of this celebrated holiday. It explores the emergence of the Day of the Dead as a symbol of Mexican and Mexican-American national identity. Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead poses a serious challenge to the widespread stereotype of the morbid Mexican, unafraid of death, and obsessed with dying. In fact, the Day of the Dead, as shown here, is a powerful affirmation of life and creativity. Beautifully illustrated, this book is essential for anyone interested in Mexican culture, art, and folklore, as well as contemporary globalization and identity formation.

Shortlisted for the Katharine Briggs Folklore Award 2007 "A cogent, attractively presented case study of a single festival in its diverse forms. It provides a lucid account of cultural change and a careful plotting of causes and influences." (Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, March 2009) "As Brandes explains in this small, well-written, colorfully illustrated volume, the Day of the Dead has strayed far from its origins as a Mexican version of the pan-Roman Catholic All Saints' and All Souls' days to become a spectacular international and interethnic happening ... Recommended." (CHOICE) "Penetrating look at how religious ritual can be shaped and transformed by culture to serve new purposes in a rapidly changing world." (Missiology) "Erudite and charming, Brandes' book provides a welcome antidote to previous studies of Day of the Dead 'morbidty,' segueing seamlessly from the Mexican festivities to Mexican-Americans in California. The book is destined to become a classic in Hispanic studies." David D. Gilmore, SUNY, Stony Brook "This is a marvelous book. Brandes, a perceptive analyst and delightful writer, mines his years of fieldwork to offer both the telling ethnographic episode and the revealing photograph. Skulls to the Living not only illuminates the fascinating rituals of the Day of the Dead, but offers rich insight into changing and kaleidoscopic Mexican culture as well." David I. Kertzer, Brown UniversityFrom the Back CoverEach October, as the Day of the Dead draws near, Mexican markets overflow with decorated breads, fanciful paper cutouts, and whimsical toy skulls and skeletons. To honor deceased relatives, Mexicans decorate graves and erect home altars. Drawing on a rich array of historical and ethnographic evidence, this volume reveals the origin and changing character of this celebrated holiday. It explores the emergence of the Day of the Dead as a symbol of Mexican and Mexican-American national identity. Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead poses a serious challenge to the widespread stereotype of the morbid Mexican, unafraid of death, and obsessed with dying. In fact, the Day of the Dead, as shown here, is a powerful affirmation of life and creativity. Beautifully illustrated, this book is essential for anyone interested in Mexican culture, art, and folklore, as well as contemporary globalization and identity formation.