



MARINA

The Zendejas-Viveros family immigrated to California from Michoacán, Mexico, an impressive feat for a family of 11.

During the crossing the family was split apart, causing errors in the immigration record. 7 of children, as well as their mother, were incorrectly recorded as "Cendejas" while the others were correctly recorded as Zendejas.

Marina, child of Veronica Cendejas and Enrique Lopez, was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. As a first generation family, Dia de los Muertos was celebrated in the home.

The items enclosed in this display are copies of the Ofrenda that Marina displays in their home. Many of these pieces came directly from Mexico, handed down by their grandparents and parent.

THANK YOU FOR VISITING MY FAMILY





XAVIER ZENDEJAS

MAY 193 - SEPT. 2018

This is my grandfather, Xavier Zendejas (Ha-vier Sen-deh-has.) In his hometown of Villa Jimenez, Michoacán, he had a reputation of being a scandal and a troublemaker. The son of a tavern keeper, brothel owner (Chayo), and railroad bandit (Pedro.) He set his sights on America and Lilia Viveros, his lovely and devoutly Catholic neighbor; in the hopes of making a fresh start.

His minor wealth and plans to leave Mexico were enough to convince Raymundo and Guadalupe to marry their daughter. After all 9 of Xavier and Lilia's children were born, they left Mexico for America.

Xavier passed away in Torrance, CA on September 17, 2018 surrounded by 8 of his living children, their spouses, 35 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.





ROSARIO JUAREZ

MAMA CHAYO

Mama Chayo is Abuelita Rosario, Xavier's mother. Chayo was a firebrand and notorious in Villa Jimenez. After the death of her husband she refused to give up her independence (and the comfortable living left to her,) so instead took a lover.

To improve her son's chances of a reputable match (by way of wealth,) Chayo opened her home to travelers and boarders, selling liquor and - rumor has it - the company of a young lady. Her youngest son, Xavier, would use that money to start his family, and move to America.





MARCOS CENDEJAS

SEPT 1958 - MAY 2004

Marcos "Aleman" Cendejas was the fourth eldest child of Lilia and Xavier. After graduating high school he began working to support his family.

Sadly, Marcos would succumb to the lure of street gangs and illicit drugs. He would come in and out of the lives of his family members for the next decade.

In 2004 Marcos went missing, launching a 6 month search by his siblings and relatives. They would not reach him in time. To date, we have no idea what the circumstances were of his death, or why he was back in Mexico, a place he had not been to in years. His body is interred in Tecata, Baja California, Mexico.





GEORGE ALBERTO CARRANZA

MARCH 1970 - MARCH 2021

George "Albert" Carranza is related to the Zendejas-Viveros Family by way of Lilia. The second son of Lilia's sister Nena, cousin of Veronica, 2nd cousin of Marina.

George was a vibrant soul, the life of the party, and everyone's favorite cousin. He passed away suddenly in March 2021 after going into sudden cardiac arrest for an undiagnosed heart condition.





PAPPAS

2001 - 2018

Pappas was an abandoned mutt who found his way into a shelter where my family worked. Left for dead, this 11 year old dog was on the euthanasia list. My aunt brought him home out of pity. Learning that the dog was not expected to live longer than 30 days, I agreed to foster him until his passing.

7 years later, I laid Pappas down for his forever rest. He was a feisty, moody, grumpy, cantankerous old man dog. He thought he was the King of the House, and was dubbed Kal Doggo by my husband. We said goodbye the same way we said hello; as I held him and knew things were never going to be the same.





LA CATRINA CALAVERA

There are many iterations of she who is known as "La Catrina Calavera." She has transformed into a sacred symbol (not to be mistaken with Santa Muerte) representing the dignity of the dead. She is often depicted many ways: as a bride, as a wealthy woman, or a working woman.

In this statue, La Catrina is dancing Baile Folklórico, a type of Mexican folk dancing. Personally, I prefer this iteration of her, as Death is not still, but constant. Neither is it something to be feared, instead, something to be celebrated as a natural part of life.

That is, after all, the importance of Día de los Muertos.





LAS VELAS THE CANDLES

Candles and flame play an important part in many religious ceremonies or spiritual observances.

For Dia de los Muertos, we light candles as a beacon for souls to flock to. These tiny flames light the way back home for souls who have begun to wander in search of their loved ones. For those of us who have left our homeland behind, these candles are especially important. Without them to guide the way, spirits can become lost and separated forever from their familial ties, trapped between worlds and unable to rest.





LAS FLORES THE FLOWERS

Traditionally, marigolds are used in observance of Dia de los Muertos. In my family, we used roses. (I think it was just my grandmother's preference.)

All throughout the month of October I wear roses in my hair for the same reason I light candles. Restlessness is a common trait in my family, and I know some will begin their journey through the afterworld as early as possible. Setting roses in my hair, and placing them on my ofrenda, is an intimate nod between myself and the family I am expecting will visit.





PAN DE MUERTO, PAN DULCE Y ANTOJITOS

BREAD OF THE DEAD, SWEET BREAD, AND TASTY SNACKS

Pan de Muerto (Bread of the Dead) is eaten on Dia de los Muertos. The decorations represent the bones of the dead, and the shield at the center represents Chimalma, an Aztec goddess and mother of Quetzalcoatl: the Sun God.

Pan de Muerto is made specifically for this holiday. It is placed on the ofrenda or at a gravesite with other offerings (antojitos, tamales, chocolate calentito, pan dulce, and all of their favorite foods) to share with the spirits who are expected to arrive; similar to setting a place for them at the table. This fantastic meal is enjoyed with the dead at the strike of midnight.

