

**Celebrating the Lives of the Dead,
The Day of the Dead and Obon
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In many cultures, death is associated with sadness, not celebration. But there are those that have embraced a different perspective, one in which the dead are commemorated with lively festivals instead of somber speeches. The Day of the Dead and Obon are two examples of such occasions.

The Day of the Dead, or Día de los 10 Muertos in Spanish, is observed primarily in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Taking place on the first and second of November, the festival celebrates the lives of the deceased and features feasts, parades, music, and parties. Participants believe that during the festival, the spirits of the dead return to earth to be reunited with their loved ones and take part in the celebrations.

To prepare for the festival, people clean the graves of departed family members and decorate homes and graveyards with items that the deceased enjoyed while they were alive. Food, drink, flowers, and other offerings are placed near the grave, creating a kind of altar. The mood is cheerful, with people in brightly colored costumes and decorated skulls and skeletons featuring heavily. In these celebrations, people remember together the lives of those who have passed away.

Celebrated in Japan, Obon is a Buddhist festival that commemorates departed ancestors, whose spirits are said to return to earth to visit relatives around the 15th day of the seventh month of each year. However, when Japan switched from the lunar calendar to the Gregorian calendar during the Meiji era, different regions responded differently, leading to three different Obon festival times.

During Obon, families make their way back to their hometowns to gather at ancestral homes, clean relatives' graves, and pay their respects at Buddhist temples. Lanterns are illuminated to guide spirits home, and altars are adorned with food for them. The festival itself is a lively affair, with the main custom being a traditional dance, called Bon Odori, which is performed to the rhythm of taiko drums. When Obon ends, residents light bonfires or place floating lanterns on rivers and lakes to guide their ancestors back to the spirit world.

While the Day of the Dead and Obon may seem strange to those who are used to mourning the dead, they offer an important lesson. They remind us to cherish the memories of our ancestors and celebrate life even in the face of death.

1. What is this article mainly focusing on?
(A) Introducing the history of the festival Obon in Japan.
(B) Introducing two festivals for commemorating the deceased.
(C) Showing different perspectives on how people mourn for their loss.
(D) Introducing required objects for The Day of the Dead.
2. What do both festivals share in common?
(A) People joining both festivals will dress up colorful.
(B) People will decorate bones during both festivals.
(C) People will visit religious places during both festivals.
(D) People will clean the graves in both festivals.
3. Which of the following is not true about Obon?
(A) It is rooted in Mexico.
(B) It is a religious festival.
(C) It used to be on July 15th.
(D) It has a kind of special dance.

4. Fill in the blanks

Instead of associating death with sadness, cherishing the memories of our ancestors and celebrating life in the face of death with festivals such as The Day of the Dead and Obon is also another option.