

HISPANIC FUNERAL TRADITIONS

Hispanic culture is rich and vibrant, exuberant and colorful. With traditions dating back through centuries of cultural influence from more than 20 countries, the Hispanic family bond is strong and brings special meaning when saying goodbye to a loved one.

Catholicism is also very deeply-rooted within Hispanic heritages, even non-Catholics include Catholic traditions in their funerals.

Hispanic funeral ceremony

The visitation is a time to remember the loved one and spend time with family. Usually, it starts later in the day, lasting longer than four hours and sometimes even late into the night or overnight. Food such as pan dulce or pastelitos and coffee are often served at the funeral home. Candles and flowers play an important role at the visitation as well as used to decorate the burial grounds of the loved one. The visitations are mostly held at a funeral home, but others, based on their traditions, prefer to conduct the funeral within the privacy of their homes.

Many families also have a service at a Catholic Church the next day. The casket is usually taken to the Church and the service will likely include a full Mass dedicated to the loved one. Additionally, a rosary is sometimes said as well, usually conducted by a Priest at either the funeral home or the family's home.

Hispanic burial

Following the funeral ceremony, the burial takes place, with family and friends at the cemetery for the interment. Many times a Priest is also present and music, including live mariachis, play by the gravesite. Afterward, family members may get together to share a meal, pray and discuss memories of the loved one.

Mainly because of the Catholic influence, cremation is still not as usual for most Hispanics, but those that select it, often place or bury the cremated remains at a cemetery or church to follow the Vatican's guidelines on the conservation of the ashes.

In some cases, Hispanics wish to be returned to their homeland to be buried with other members of the family.

After the burial

For Hispanics, celebrating and honoring the loved ones continues way after the funeral is over, examples include:

- Novenarios – For nine consecutive days following the funeral, family and friends pray for the soul and eternal rest of the loved one. This can take place at a church or at the family's home.
- Anniversary of death – Usually a Mass is set up on the anniversary date of the death in the name of the loved one. Sometimes, there is a reception with food afterward.

- Special Days – Within the Hispanic culture, death is revered and holidays are set aside as to pay special respect to the dead. Celebrations often depend on the country of origin.
- All Souls Day (November 1st) – Families pray, remember loved ones, attend Mass and visit the cemetery to spruce up their loved one's memorials
- Día de los Muertos (November 2nd) – Families make altars honoring their loved ones, visit the cemetery with flowers, food, music to celebrate those that have departed.
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Planning a Hispanic funeral

Celebrations of life are becoming more common for Hispanics, and our professionals can help you plan the right celebration for your loved one. A custom event might be a family feast or visitation that goes into the night at the funeral home or an event with mariachis. Think about how the person's uniqueness can be conveyed through a service. What pictures and stories can be shared during the service? Should the service be bilingual or in just one language?

Hispanic funeral traditions speak to the love shared in their communities and their dedication to family. If you are seeking to plan a Hispanic funeral that will honor your family traditions and the wishes of your loved one, our professionals can help. We specialize in honoring family customs while adding personal details where appropriate.

Whether you need help selecting or sending appropriate flowers, arranging an extended visitation or creating a beautiful event, our providers can help.