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**October  
Family  
Festival  
Art  
Projects**

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# Skeleton Puppet

## materials

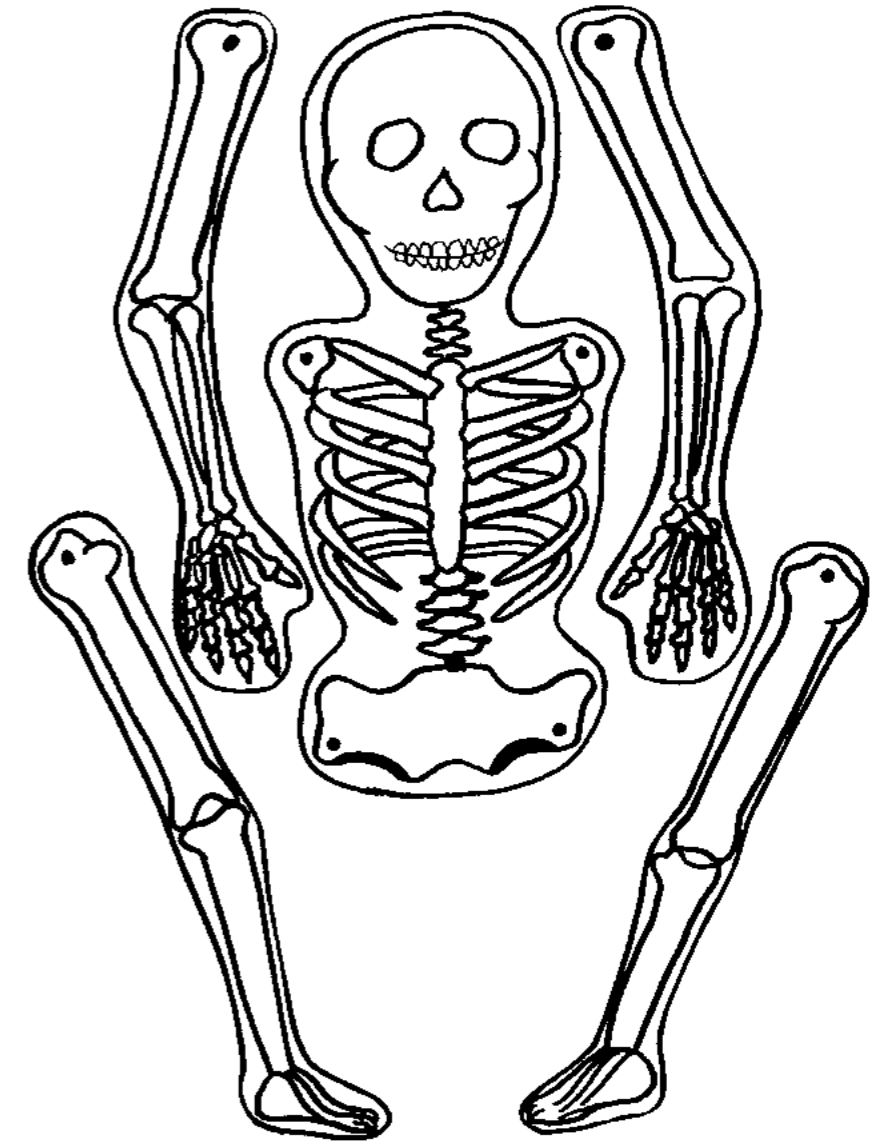
Cardstock Paper	Scissors	Dowel
Coloring Pencils/ Markers/ Crayons	Tape/Glue Gun	Hole Punch
Sequin	Fasteners, 4	Glue Stick

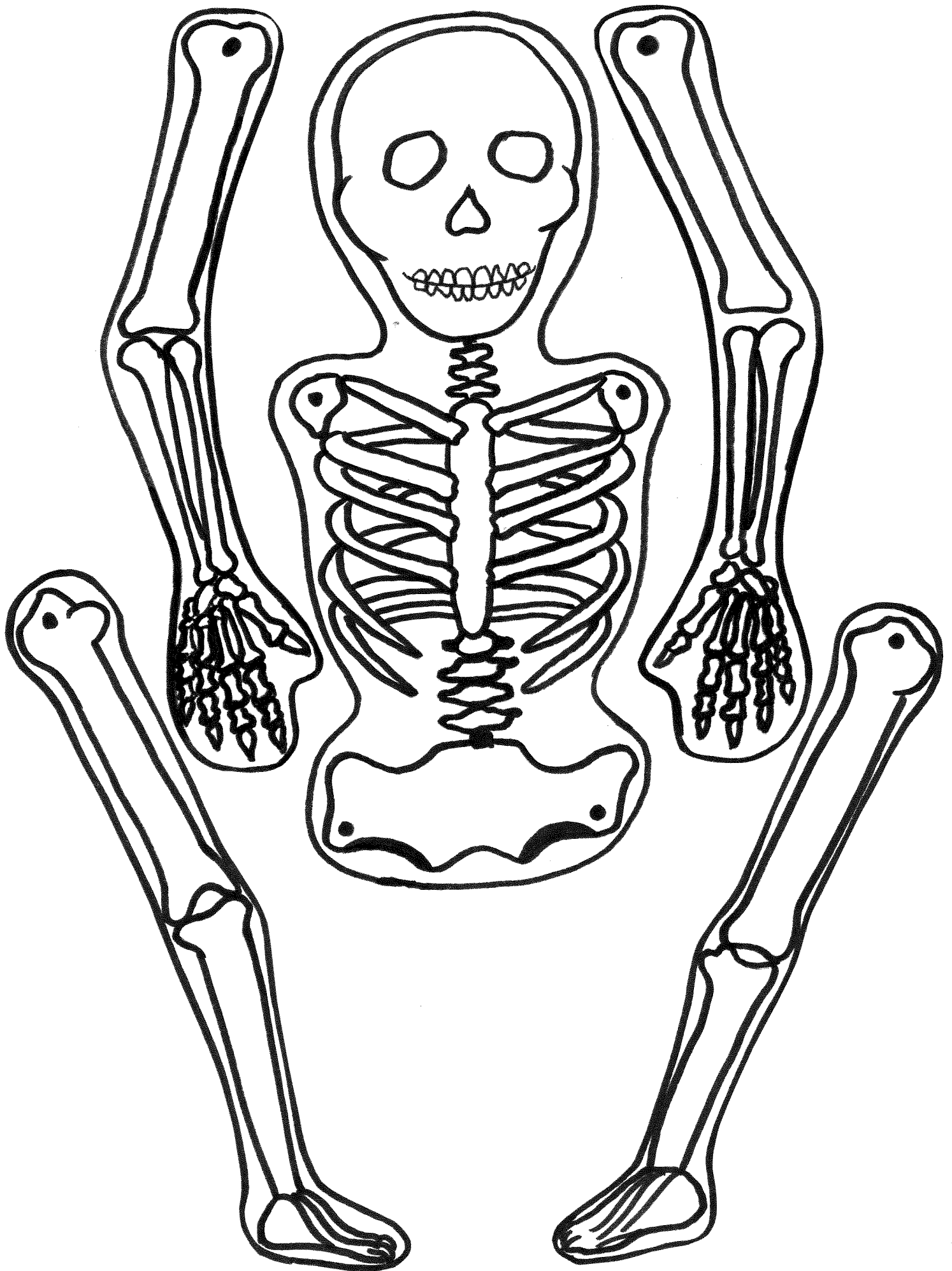
## Background Information

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, celebrations originated in the Aztec culture in Mexico over 4,000 years ago. The Aztecs had elaborate ceremonies honoring the dead that lasted many days with a special day for children and another for adults. Día de los Muertos memorializes and welcomes the spirits of the dead to enjoy and share a brief time of earthly pleasures with their family and friends. Calacas, or skeletons, are used for decorations. Mexican artisans are famous for their creativity, use of color, and sense of humor. Skeleton art allows us to lighten our mood and laugh at death.

## Tips

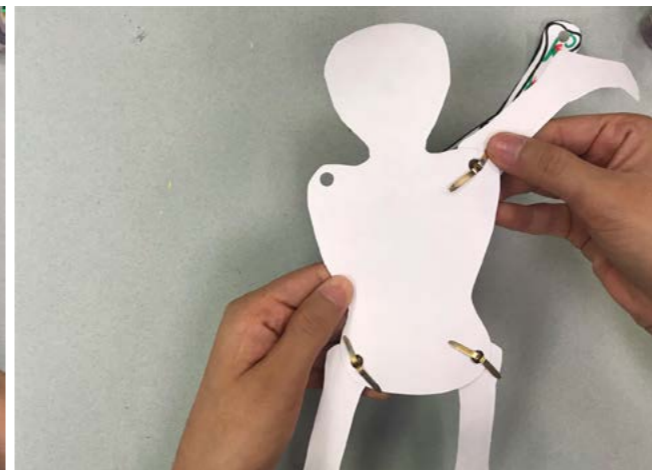
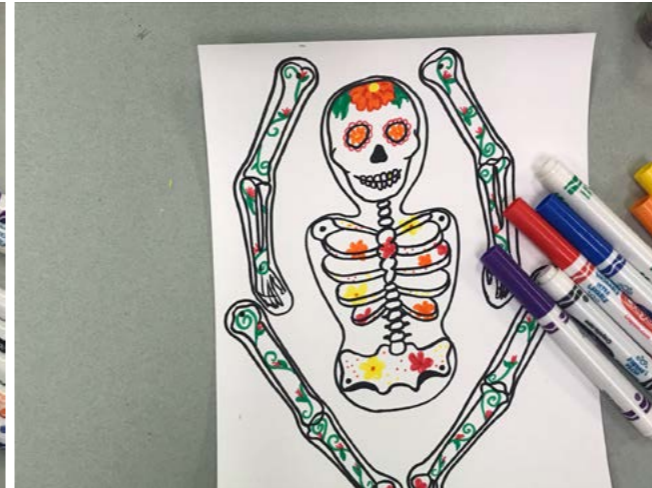
- Be careful when using a hot glue gun.
- Yarn can be used to replace the fasteners.
- Be creative, add feathers or make a hat for your skeleton.





## Procedure

1. Print the template on cardstock paper.
2. Decorate your skeleton using markers, coloring pencils or crayons.
3. Use scissors to cut out the skeleton.
4. Hole punch where marked.
5. Connect parts together with the fasteners.
6. Hot glue the dowel to the back of the skeleton.
7. Glue sequin to the skeleton.
8. Put on display to celebrate Día de los Muertos.



# 2

# Mexican Sugar Skulls

## materials: Sugar Skulls

Sugar	Mixing Bowl	Molds
Measuring Cups and Spoons	Merengue Powder	Cardboard squares, 2x3 inches
Water	Scissors	

## materials: Frosting

Powdered Sugar	Metal Spoon	Scissors
Gel Food Coloring	Standing Mixer	Spatula
Plastic Snack Bags	Measuring Cups and Spoons	

## materials: Frosting

Sequin*	Foil*
Scissors	Paper Towels

\*optional

## Background Information

Day of the Dead celebrations originated in the Aztec culture in Mexico over 4,000 years ago. The Aztecs had elaborate ceremonies honoring the dead that lasted many days with a special day for children and another for adults. El Día de los Muertos memorializes and welcomes the spirits of the dead to enjoy and share a brief time of earthly pleasures with their family and friends.

Sugar art was brought to the New World by Italian missionaries in the 17th century. The first church mention of sugar art was from Palermo at Easter time when little sugar lambs and angels were made to adorn the side altars in the Catholic Church. Mexico, abundant in sugar production, learned quickly from the friars how to make sugar art for their religious festivals. Clay molded sugar figures of angels, sheep and sugar skulls go back to the 18th century Colonial Period.

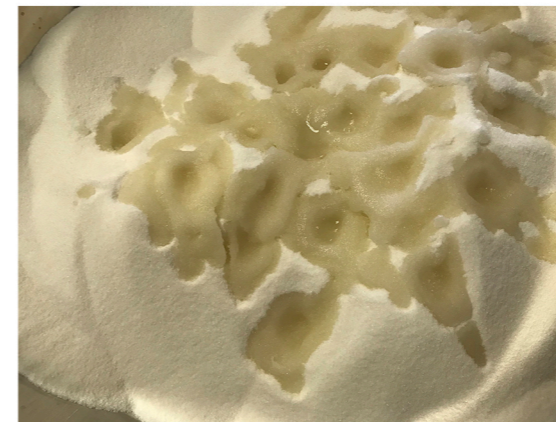
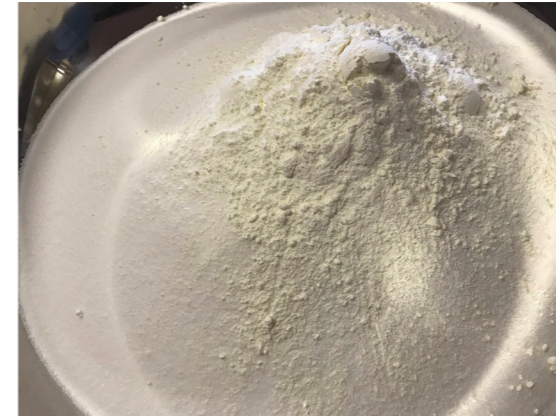
Sugar skulls represent a departed soul whose name is written on the skull's forehead, and they are placed on the home ofrenda or gravestone to honor the return of that spirit. Sugar skull art reflects a style of folk art with big happy smiles, colorful icing, sparkly tin, and glittery adornments. Sugar skulls are labor intensive and made in very small batches in the homes of sugar skull makers. These wonderful artisans are disappearing as fabricated and imported candy skulls take their place. Special thanks to Angela Villalba, of MexicanSugarSkull.com for this information.



## Procedure: Sugar Skulls

For every 1 cup of sugar add 1 teaspoon of merengue powder and 1 teaspoon of water.  
10 cups of sugar will yield about 18 medium sugar skulls or 5 large skulls.  
Sugar skulls should be made on dry hot days for best results.

1. Pour the sugar into the mixing bowl, along with the merengue powder.
2. Thoroughly mix the dry ingredients.
3. Add the water and mix until the sugar feels like moist sand.  
To check if it is ready, grab some sugar in one hand and slightly squeeze.  
Open you hand, and if the sugar stays in one piece, the mixture is ready.  
If it falls apart, it needs more mixing or a bit more water.
4. Have your molds and cardboard squares ready.
5. Pour sugar into a mold, pressing hard to fill in the details in the mold.  
Use the edge of the cardboard piece to scrape off the extra sugar along the mold.
6. Place the cardboard on top of the sugar-side mold and flip it over.  
Place it on the table and carefully lift the mold off the skull.
7. Use a paper towel to wipe the inside of the mold and continue making sugar skulls.  
After 3 sugar skulls, wash and dry the mold.
8. Leave the sugar skulls to dry for at least 8 hours or overnight.
9. Once the sugar skulls are dry, go through each one, squeezing slightly  
to make sure they are solid. Throw away any skulls that crumble.
10. If not using right away, wrap the sugar skulls in a paper towel and store in a cardboard box.



## Procedure: Frosting

Mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of merengue powder,  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of water, and 2lbs. of powdered sugar.

1. Pour the powdered sugar and merengue into the standing mixer. Thoroughly mix the dry ingredients.
2. Put it into the lowest setting and mix the dry ingredients.
3. Slowly pour in the water.
4. Increase the setting to midlevel and mix for 9 minutes, until the mixture peaks.
5. Separate the mixture into small cups/containers and add food coloring.
6. Mix each thoroughly until the color is vibrant.
7. Prepare the plastic bags.
8. Scoop one tablespoon and place it inside one corner of the baggie.
9. Use the baggie to scrape the frosting off the spoon.
10. Press down to take out the air and zip it close.
11. Continue placing the frosting inside the bags with the rest of the colors.



## Procedure: Decorating the Sugar Skulls

1. Have your frosting, sugar skull, scissors, sequin, foil, and paper towels ready.
2. Cut the very tip of a frosting bag- you can always cut it larger, but not smaller.
3. Test each color on a paper towel. Each color will have a different consistency. Practice swirls and flowers to test each color.
4. Begin by adding flowers around the head. Add swirls, leaves, and dots.
5. Use white frosting for the teeth and black frosting to outline them.
6. Adding sequin- the frosting acts as glue. Put a dot of frosting, then push the sequin on top.
7. Adding foil- cut the foil to fit the size of the skull. Add frosting to the skull and smooth the foil on top.  
Add frosting along the edges of the foil.  
Add the name on the foil using the frosting.
8. Once you are finished, put it on display.
9. Cleaning up- the frosting will harden slowly and must be used as soon as possible, then thrown away.

**Note:** Sugar skulls and Frosting are for decoration only. Please do not eat the sugar skulls.

**Storage:** After displaying them, wrap the skulls in paper towels and store in cardboard boxes. Sugar skulls can last for years.







# Gorditas

## Ingredients

masa (corn dough)	
refried beans	cheese (queso fresco)
guacamole	carnitas

When placing favorite foods on the Ofrenda (memorial altar) make plain gorditas with no filling. Otherwise, when making gorditas for your family, use the recipe below.

Gorditas (little fat ones) are thick corn tortillas that are filled with your choice of Mexican delicacies. Masa, means dough in Spanish. Masa de maíz means corn dough. When buying masa de maíz to make gorditas make sure it is masa para tortillas and not masa para tamales. Either buy the masa the same day you will be cooking it or place it in the refrigerator for no longer than a day or two. Masa de maíz has no preservatives.

## Process

1. The best place to purchase masa de maíz is in a Mexican market or deli. Try Northgate or Superior Markets.
2. Prepare the fillings, beans, cheese (queso fresco is preferred), guacamole, carnitas, etc. so that everyone can prepare their gordita “hot off the griddle.” All the fillings can be purchased at the market or deli. (Photo 2)
3. Heat the griddle to medium high
4. Place the masa in a large bowl and make tennis ball size balls. 1 lb. of masa makes between 4-6 gorditas depending on the thickness. (Photo 3)
5. Pat out the masa ball to a thickness of ¼ inch, or less if you may prefer a thinner gordita. (Photo 4)
6. Place on the hot griddle cooking from 2-3 minutes on each side depending on the thickness. Gordita is cooked when browned areas appear on both sides.. (Photo 5)
7. Make a slit into the gordita (Photo 6)
8. Fill with your favorite Mexican delicacies and enjoy!. (Photo 7)



Photo 1

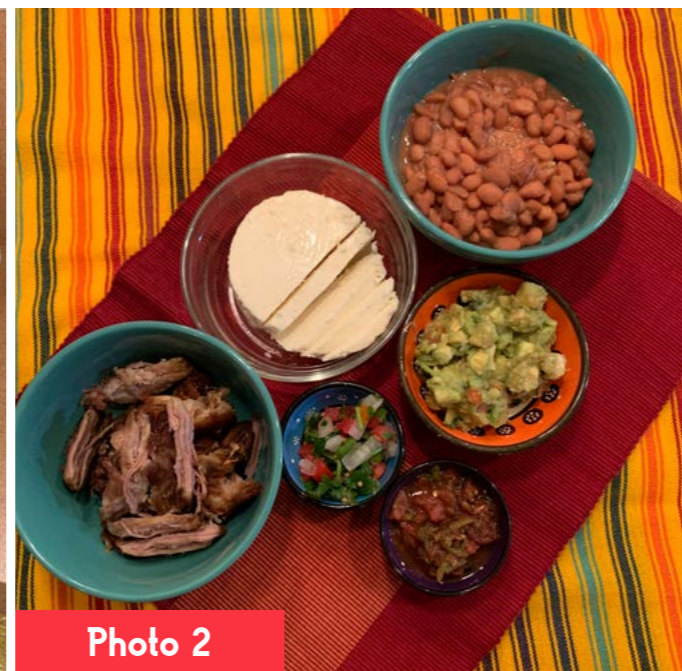


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

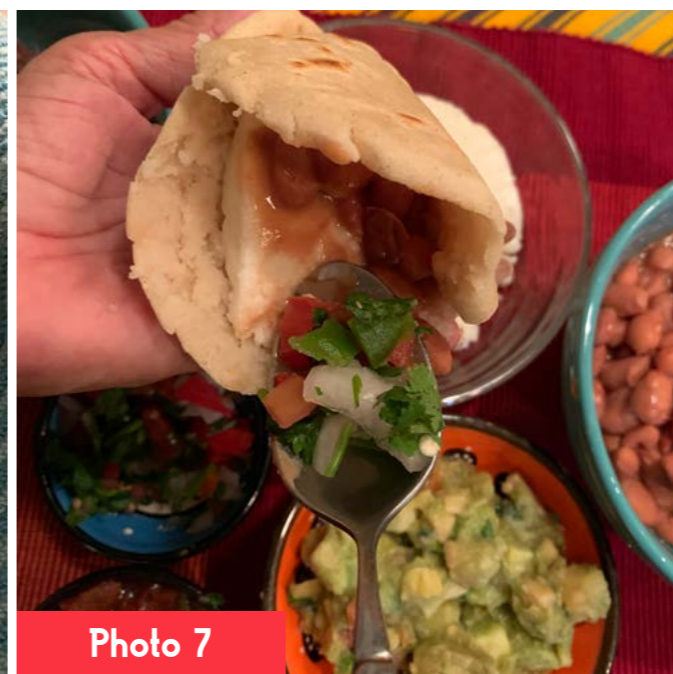


Photo 7



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