

NEWS

"I'm sick of the sun. It burns everyone."
SICK OF THE SUN POPPY

Día de los Muertos parade focuses on deaths in ICE custody

BY KELLY KONG AND SOPHIA LE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

Unidad Latina en Acción hosted its 15th annual Día de los Muertos celebration on Saturday at Bregamos Community Theater, followed by a parade through Fair Haven.

The parade was dedicated to the 20 migrants who, according to NPR, have died in U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement's custody in 2025.

"Everybody's afraid. There are a lot of issues convincing people to be on the streets," John Lugo, the co-founder and community organizing director of ULA, said. "People should know that we're here, we're going to stay, and we're not going to stop bringing the good stuff that we bring to the community of New Haven."

Originating in pre-Columbian Mexico, Día de los Muertos celebrates and honors deceased loved ones by welcoming their spirits back for a brief reunion. Saturday's festivities included face painting, Latin fare, music and dance, as well as a community "ofrenda" — an altar honoring departed friends and family members — dedicated to people who died in ICE custody.

According to ICE's official website, "any death that occurs in ICE custody is a significant cause for concern. ICE prioritizes the health, safety and well-being of all aliens in its custody." ICE also "employs a multilayered, interagency approach when a detained alien passes away in ICE custody," the website reads.

In light of the federal government's increased deportation efforts since President Donald Trump took office, Mayor Justin Elicker joined the hundred participants in the parade to demonstrate his support for the local

immigrant community, he said.

"The Trump administration is very actively attacking the immigrant community, particularly residents that are undocumented," Elicker said. "That is not reflective of New Haven's values, and we've done a lot to fight back on that."

State Senator Gary Winfield, who represents parts of New Haven and West Haven, said that it is especially important for elected officials to show up for their constituents in person this year.

"A day of celebration, I think, is needed when you're dealing with all of those terrible things," Winfield said. "To have a period of time of celebration and release can go a long way towards helping people to continue fighting."

Because immigrant communities are facing increased surveillance and the threat of deportation, Lugo said that ULA conducted heavier recruitment among American citizens and local politicians for the festival.

"That way, we create some kind of safety net," Lugo said. "It's important for the community to see that we're getting the support, and not everybody's a Trump supporter."

Kay McAuliffe, a member of Connecticut Civil Liberties Defense Committee, showed up with fellow members of her organization, hoping to make the event feel larger in scale and less vulnerable, she said.

"It's a scary time to have a cultural celebration," McAuliffe said. "We've lost community members, and we have to fight for the people who are still here and fight so that this doesn't keep happening."

During the parade, several attendees wore costumes and makeup to celebrate both the living and the dead.

"I made my skirt with the things



KELLY KONG / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

At the Unidad Latina en Acción's annual celebration on Saturday, local officials and community members spoke out against President Donald Trump's anti-immigration agenda.

that are from myself, like you see the eagle? It's my freedom," attendee Antonia Aguilar said.

Aguilar has been participating in the parade for the past seven years since immigrating from Puebla, Mexico, she said. This year, she also embroidered spiders, scorpions, and dragon flies onto her dress.

"They say when this dragon flies around it is because their spirits that are dead are around or an angel is present," Aguilar said. "That's why I carry them."

Participants wore costumes not only to honor loved ones, but also to address

their frustration with the Trump administration's immigration policy.

At the head of the parade, the leader of the crowd wore a dress with a long train embellished with flowers, skeletons and skulls. A poster extending from the top of her dress displayed, "Ni El Presidente Trump se salva de la MUERTE (Not even President Trump is safe from death)."

Briam Timko, a volunteer coordinator for ULA, said that every one of ULA's public parades is also a protest.

"We're saying, 'We're here. We

exist. We're not going anywhere,'" he said. "Right now, honestly, being a migrant openly is more or less a protest in this country because they've criminalized it."

More than 100 people marched in the parade starting from Blatchley Street up to Lombard Street, down to Woolsey Street and back to Bregamos Theater.

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New Haven fine dining on display during Restaurant Week



CAMILA PÉREZ / HEAD PHOTOGRAPHER EDITOR

Twenty-three restaurants in eight New Haven neighborhoods will offer lunch and dinner at set prices during the two-week event in Mill River.

BY NICK CIMINIELLO
STAFF REPORTER

New Haven Restaurant Week, organized by Market New Haven, has expanded to two weeks this year — lasting from Sunday, Nov. 2, to Saturday, Nov. 15.

The event features a variety of cuisines, including American, Belgian, Spanish, Italian, Peruvian and Mexican. Most of the restaurants featured are in the city's downtown area, but restaurants in other neighborhoods such as Wooster Square, Long Wharf, Westville and East Rock are included as well. For the two weeks, participating restaurants have special menus at set prices for lunch or dinner.

"Each year, New Haven Restaurant Week showcases the talent and creativity of our chefs and restaurateurs," Bruno Baggetta, the chief marketing officer of Market

New Haven, said in a news release. "Expanding to two weeks gives both restaurants and guests more opportunities to enjoy everything New Haven's dining scene has to offer."

New Haven's was the first organized restaurant week program in Connecticut, having been in operation for 18 years, according to Market New Haven. Initially focused on the downtown dining scene, it has expanded to involve restaurants throughout the city.

In order to deal with the increased traffic, The Shops at Yale will offer free two-hour parking with a receipt for \$50 or more from any participating restaurant. During lunch, Park New Haven will also offer a flat \$6 parking rate in its Crown Street and Temple Street garages.

Some restaurants will offer both a two-course lunch and three-course dinner at set prices, while others will

only offer dinner.

The restaurants offering dinner for \$55 per person are 80 Proof American Kitchen & Bar, Jack's Bar and Steakhouse, John Davenport's, Melting Pot, Olea and Zinc.

Those offering dinner for \$45 are Barcelona Wine Bar, Camacho Garage, Encore by Goodfellas, L'Oracio and Tre Scalini.

Eight restaurants will offer both lunch for \$25 and dinner for \$45: Caffè Bravo, Casanova, Chacra Pisco Bar, Geronimo Tequila Bar & Southwest Grill, Il Gabbiano, Pacifico, South Bay and Villa Lulu.

Finally, those offering lunch for \$25 and dinner for \$55 are Atelier Florian, BLDG at Hotel Marcel, Harvest Wine Bar and Heirloom.

Market New Haven partners with the city to promote local tourism.

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Interest in New Haven rose, per list of suggested travel spots

BY ESMERALDA VASQUEZ-FERNANDEZ
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Trending travel destinations worldwide for next year include far-flung locations like Limón, Costa Rica, Madeira, Portugal — and New Haven.

A report by Skyscanner, a British search aggregator, found that online searches for New Haven spiked by 39 percent this year — from January through June compared to the same period last year — earning the Elm City a spot on its list of 10 top travel destinations. City and state officials and a local pizza expert attributed this increased interest in New Haven to its thriving pizza industry.

"People from all over the world — England, Russia, Canada, Australia, South Africa and all of the states — come for New Haven pizza," Colin Caplan, creator of culinary entertainment company Taste of New Haven and an organizer of September's Guinness World Record-breaking Apizza Feast, said.

Caplan noted that although New Haven has been informally known as the "Pizza Capital of the United States" for years, the city officially received this title from its own U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro in a congressional statement on May 22, 2024.

In September, Caplan spearheaded New Haven's 10th annual Apizza Feast, a downtown celebration of the city's iconic style of pizza. The event broke the Guinness World Record for the largest pizza party, with 4,525 participants. The event generated attention from news outlets across the country, drawing more attention to the city.

Anthony Anthony, Connecticut's chief marketing officer, works with a team of 16 employees to promote the state's brand and, among other goals, promote travel to Connecticut. Anthony said Connecticut's budget for pushing tourism is 4.5 million dollars.

Last fall, the state updated highway signs to read "Welcome to Connecticut, Home of the Pizza Capital of the United States." Connecticut launched pizza license plates in the spring to promote travel to New Haven.

Anthony described his team's work to promote travel to Connecticut as a "labor of love."

"We care deeply about the small businesses," he said. "Connecticut has the biggest number of independent restaurants. 97 percent of them are owned individually. So that is one thing that makes Connecticut so great, the village of Connecticut — we still have that small intimacy and sense of belonging."

Michael Piscitelli, New Haven's



XIMENA SOLORZANO / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Twenty-three restaurants in eight New Haven neighborhoods will offer lunch and dinner at set prices during the two-week event in Mill River.

economic development administrator, cited the city's pizza industry and other attractions as increasing interest in the city.

"Globally significant museums and the meaningful nature of innovation here in the city is driving New

Haven tourism," he added, pointing to the Yale Peabody Museum and Yale New Haven Hospital.

Piscitelli said that New Haven's annual Restaurant Week, expanded to two weeks this year, boosts travel to the city.

Restaurant week kicked off on Nov. 2 and ends on Nov. 15.

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