

Your Name

Mr. Larson

Intermediate Computers

July 4, 1776

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Halloween: Fast Facts

Facts about Halloween!

The observance of Halloween, which dates back to Celtic rituals thousands of years ago, has long been associated with images of witches, ghosts, devils and hobgoblins. In the United States, the first official citywide Halloween celebration occurred in Anoka, Minn., in 1921. Over the years, Halloween customs and rituals have changed dramatically. Today, many of the young and young at heart take a more light-spirited approach. They don scary disguises or ones that may bring on smiles when they go door to door for treats, or attend or host a Halloween party.

Trick or Treat. There were an estimated 36.1 million trick-or-treaters in 2006 between 5 to 13 years old across the United States, down 45,000 from 2005. Obviously, many other children who are older than 13 and younger than 5 also go trick-or-treating.

Houses. About 109.6 million houses had trick-or-treaters come to their house in 2006. Ninety-three percent of households who consider their neighborhood safe. In addition, 78 percent said they were not afraid to walk alone at night.

Jack-O'-Lanterns and Pumpkin Pies. 1 billion pounds of pumpkins were grown in the United States in 2006. Illinois led the country by producing 492 million pounds of the vined orange gourd. Pumpkin patches in California, Ohio and Pennsylvania also provided

lots of pumpkins: Each state produced at least 100 million pounds. The value of all pumpkins produced by major pumpkin-producing states was \$101 million.

Candy. There are 1,198 U.S. manufacturing establishments that produced chocolate and cocoa products in 2005, employing 38,718 people and shipping \$13.6 billion worth of goods. California led the nation in the number of chocolate and cocoa manufacturing establishments, with 128, followed by Pennsylvania, with 121. Each person in the U.S. eats an estimated 26 pounds of candy, it is believed a large portion is consumed around Halloween.

Costumes. There are 2,232 costume rental and formal wear establishments across the nation in 2005.

Halloween Symbols

The most prominent Halloween symbol is the carved pumpkin with a lit candle inside. This is an Irish tradition of carving a lantern which goes back centuries. These lanterns are usually carved from turnips or potatoes. The pumpkin carving was first associated with Halloween in North America, where the pumpkin was available, and much larger and easier to carve. The jack-o'-lantern can be traced back to the Irish legend of Stingy Jack.

The imagery surrounding Halloween is largely an amalgamation of the Halloween season itself, nearly a century of work from American filmmakers and graphic artists, and a rather commercialized take on the dark and mysterious. Halloween imagery tends to involve death, magic, or mythical monsters. Common Halloween characters include, skeletons, ghost stories, ghosts, ghouls, witches, vampires, bats, owls, crows, vultures,

haunted houses, pumpkinmen, black cats, aliens, spiders, goblins, zombies, mummies, werewolves and demons.

Particularly in America, symbolism is inspired by classic horror films, which contain fictional figures like Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, The Wolf Man, and The Mummy. More modern horror antagonists like Freddy Krueger, Michael Myers, Leatherface, Jason Voorhees, and the Jigsaw Killer have also become associated with the holiday. Homes are often decorated with these symbols around Halloween.

Black and orange are the traditional colors of Halloween. In modern Halloween images and products, purple, green and red are also prominent. The use of these colors is largely a result of holiday advertising dating back over a century, and tends to be associated with various aspects of Halloween tradition.

History Of The Jack-O'Lantern

Pumpkin carving is a popular part of modern America's Halloween celebration. Come October, pumpkins can be found everywhere in the country from doorsteps to dinner tables. Despite the widespread carving that goes on in this country every autumn, few Americans really know why or when the jack o'lantern tradition began. Or, for that matter, whether the pumpkin is a fruit or a vegetable. Read on to find out!

People have been making jack o'lanterns at Halloween for centuries. The practice originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "Stingy Jack." According to the story, Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him. True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put it into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the Devil from

changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would not bother Jack for one year and that, should Jack die, he would not claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could not come down until the Devil promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years.

Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word not to claim his soul, would not allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of Jack's lanterns by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them into windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack o'lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States. They soon found that pumpkins, a fruit native to America, make perfect jack o'lanterns.

"The History of Halloween." July 4, 1776. <http://www.history.com>.