



I'm a ghost, not a spirit.

ONE OF THE USA'S STRANGEST AND LOVELIEST HOLIDAYS

Although Halloween traditions such as costumes, jack o'lanterns and monster-themed parties are widely associated with the United States now, Halloween has its roots¹ in the ancient Celtic holiday of Samhain. The Celts mostly lived in the lands that are today Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Celtic New Year's Eve

During Samhain, the Celts celebrated the end of the harvest² season and prepared for the long winter days ahead. They believed the holiday was a special time of year when fairies, ghosts and other spirits could cross from the “other world” into the land of the living. They believed that during Samhain the spirits of dead people could once again visit their homes and families.

Halloween today

But, how did an ancient pagan³ holiday become a commercialized American festival? Samhain became associated with the Christian All Saint's Day holiday sometime in the Middle Ages, and some of the Celtic traditions began to be celebrated along with new religious⁴ traditions of celebrating the dead. This continued for centuries.

By the early 1900s, the European tradition of children dressing up in costumes on certain holidays, including Halloween, had crossed over to some communities in North America. This tradition and the celebration of Halloween in general began to be popular in the 1950s thanks to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UNICEF and Halloween

UNICEF helps mothers and children in developing⁵ countries. One day, UNICEF was asking for donations⁶ – they needed money to buy powdered milk for poor children. A school librarian in Pennsylvania knew her own children would be going trick-or-treating that Halloween. Instead of asking for candy, she thought, why not ask for donations to UNICEF? Her children collected \$17 that year, and sent it to UNICEF. Soon after, UNICEF began a yearly campaign for trick-or-treaters all over the country to do the same. The UNICEF Trick-or-Treat campaign has raised⁷ more than \$188 million worldwide.

From ancient Celtic tradition to modern fundraising⁸ campaign, to a simple time to have fun with your friends and family, the celebration of Halloween continues! What will you do this October 31st?

Drive magazine asked Beth from the USA a few questions about Halloween.



How old are the children who go trick-or-treating?

It's usually school-aged children, so kids from 4 to 12 years old. And, sometimes older or younger kids think it's fun, too!

Is it the same in cities and in small towns?

In cities, people may choose to go to a party at a community center or school where they can play games and win prizes instead of trick-or-treating. In small towns, either there's a community party or the children go trick-or-treating.

Do trick-or-treaters visit only the people they know or all of their neighbors?

They usually go to every door—that way they can get more treats!

What do trick-or-treaters usually get?

Candy! At Halloween, stores sell special bags of small candy bars that are made just for trick-or-treats or parties.

Did you go trick-or-treating?

Of course! I loved dressing up in costume.

What are the most typical tricks? Are they ever played on the neighbors or is it just a threat?

I think the most classic trick is to put toilet paper on the trees or fence in someone's front yard. Usually though, it's just a threat.

Jack o'lantern

Jack o'lanterns in the United States are always carved out of big, orange pumpkins. But in Scotland and Ireland, where the tradition began, some people still carve them from turnips¹⁰.

The name for the lanterns comes from a strange light that travelers can sometimes see over marshlands¹¹. This light is probably caused by a chemical reaction, but for centuries people believed the light was actually spirits walking on the Earth.

There are also a few legends about a character named "Jack O'Lantern." In these stories, he is usually a lazy but clever man who tries to trick the Devil. At the end of the stories, sometimes Jack is turned into a restless¹² spirit with a carved turnip for a head. He wanders¹³ the countryside, carrying a candle in his head to light the path.

Nowadays, not every jack o'lantern shows us the face of "Jack," though. Often, we carve pumpkins to show spiders, cats, haunted houses and other designs related to Halloween.



Carved pumpkin



Carved turnip

VOCABULARY

¹ **root** [ru:t] – kořen

² **harvest** ['hɑ:vɪst] – sklizeň, úroda

³ **pagan** ['peɪɡən] – pohanský

⁴ **religious** [rɪ'lɪdʒəs] – náboženský

⁵ **developing** [dɪ'veləpɪŋ] – rozvojová (země)

⁶ **donation** [dəʊ'neɪʃən] – dar, příspěvek na charitu

⁷ **to raise** [reɪz] – získat peníze na charitu

⁸ **fundraising** ['fʌndreɪzɪŋ] – získávání financí na charitu

⁹ **threat** [θret] – výhrůžka

¹⁰ **turnip** ['tɜ:nɪp] – tuřín (vodnice)

¹¹ **marshland** ['mɑ:ʃlənd] – bažina

¹² **restless** ['restlɪs] – neposedný, neklidný

¹³ **to wander** ['wɒndə] – toulat se, vandrovat

MATURITA QUESTIONS

- What is Halloween?
- When is Halloween celebrated?
- What do Americans do on Halloween?
- Where did the festival come from?
- Do you celebrate Halloween? If so, what do you do?

AMERICAN VS BRITISH ENGLISH

candy – sweets
center – centre
neighbor – neighbour
store – shop
traveler – traveller