

The rich farmlands around Bixby are famous for producing an array of vegetables, fruits and nuts, but there are a few things that are a little tricky to grow, even here. One is pumpkins. The other is camels. "It's not impossible to grow pumpkins here in Oklahoma," said Steve Carmichael, whose family has run Carmichael's Produce in Bixby for the past 46 years. "But it isn't easy. They like a cooler climate. Oklahoma is usually too hot, and things just burn up, or it's too wet and they start to rot. "We've managed to grow some in the past, but we always have to import pumpkins this time of year," he said.

That's because the start of the fall season is when Carmichael's Produce sets up the Carmichael Pumpkin Patch, a harvest season celebration that offers all sorts of family-friendly, farm-related activities. Carmichael said the idea for the pumpkin patch "just sort of developed. My parents opened the store (at 14800 S. Memorial Drive) in 1976, and that year, you couldn't hardly find pumpkins anywhere. "I was in kindergarten, and my teacher asked if my family had pumpkins," he recalled. "We didn't, but we knew a guy who did, so we started having pumpkins." As time went on, the family would create a pen to hold some of the goats the family raised, "because my sister was in the Brownies at the time, and some of the kids in her troop had never seen a goat before, and we thought we'd give them that opportunity," Carmichael said. "It was such a hit with people, that they asked to bring it back the next year," he said. By 2000, the Carmichael's Pumpkin Patch had grown to such a size that the family set it up at a new location, at 17137 S. Mingo Road. The new location allows the Carmichael family to put up a spread that includes such attractions as the required pumpkin patch, wagon rides, a cane maze, a parakeet feeding encounter, the chance to purchase homemade foods such as jelly and fudge, as well as opportunities to take a ride on a pony. Or a camel. Which also are not grown in

Oklahoma. “As things grew, and we just kept adding stuff, we started showing some exotic animals,” Carmichael said. “The camels are from a guy here in Oklahoma, who brings them out for the month of October. People get a real kick out of them.” Carmichael’s Pumpkin Patch is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free, although some attractions cost extra. For more: 918-366-4728, [carmichaelsproduce.wordpress.com](http://carmichaelsproduce.wordpress.com) Here are some of the other major fall festival events that are designed for family fun (we’ll save the scary Halloween stuff for another time):

Pumpkin Town Farms 6060 S. Garnett Road, 918-605-1185 Pumpkin Town is celebrating its 22nd year, offering around 30 family activities include a corn maze, which this year pays tribute to the 40th anniversary of the arcade game Pac-Man, an expanded petting zoo, a giant jumping pillow, the “Thunder Mountain” slide, face-painting and games, plus pony and camel rides. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday-Saturday. Tickets are \$12.99 per person. HallowMarine Oklahoma Aquarium, 300 Aquarium Drive, Jenks; 918-296-3474 Get a glimpse of what lives under the sea while keeping the youngster happy at the Oklahoma Aquarium’s HallowMarine.

The aquarium will host the event that will transform its Coral Cove into a spooky play area with age-appropriate games, candy and prizes. Guests can also follow the Trick or Treat Trail and take time to interact with some of the marine life in the surrounding exhibits. Those who come in their Halloween finery will be eligible for prizes. Hours are 6:30-9 p.m. Oct. 25-31. Admission is \$13 adults, \$9 ages 3-12 (prices increase after Oct. 15). To purchase, and more information: [okaquarium.org](http://okaquarium.org). HallowZOOeen Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. North; 918-669-6600 The Tulsa Zoo’s annual Halloween trick-or-treat event will take place over two weekends in October with activities for the entire family, including candy stops, a hay maze, the “haunted train” and “meet and greet” moments with the zoo’s Ambassador Animals. Four themed areas will be set up throughout the zoo, each with special guests and events: Andy B’s Arachnid Arcade; Burger King Royal Castle; QuikTrip Pirate Island, complete with pirate ships; and the Insurica Pumpkin Patch

Playroom. Hours are 6-9 p.m. Oct. 22 and 29; 1-4 p.m. and 6-9 p.m.

Oct. 23 and 30; 1-4 p.m. Oct. 24 and 31. Tickets are \$18. To

purchase and for more information: [tulsazoo.org](http://tulsazoo.org). The Pumpkin Patch at Tulsa Glassblowing School 7440

E. Seventh St.; 918-582-4527 The artists at the Tulsa Glassblowing Studio create a plethora

of glass pumpkins that are available for purchase at the studio, located in Tulsaâ€™s

McClure Park. More 800 individual glass pumpkins will be available, but the studio requests

that shoppers make a reservation to visit and buy Oct. 1-9. Masks are required

within the studio. The Patch @ Sand Springs & Glenpool 17516 W. Eighth St.,

Sand Springs; 17902 S. U.S. 75, Glenpool, 918-640-1869 The Patch started as a small,

family-run event a decade ago, but its popularity is such that it now operates

two locations: one in Sand Springs, one in Glenpool. Both locations feature such activities

as mazes for the kiddies, water duck racing, petting zoos and inflatables, while the

Glenpool site offers a human hamster wheel, a mega chess challenge, a super slide

and more. Hours are 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Sunday through Oct. 31. Tickets are \$8

for activities (\$9 on weekends at Glenpool). For more: [seeyouatthepatch.com](http://seeyouatthepatch.com). Pleasant Valley Farms 22350

W. 71st St. South, Sand Springs; 918-248-5647 Pleasant Valley Farms offers more than a

dozen free activities, from slides and mazes to pumpkin tic-tac-toe and getting up close

to some real barnyard animals. Some of the activities require an additional fee, such

as the 1-mile hayride, riding the cow train or trying oneâ€™s hand at the

15-acre corn maze or a round of miniature golf. Hours are 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Sunday-Saturday. For more: [pleasantvalleyfarmsok.com](http://pleasantvalleyfarmsok.com) Pumpkin Festival at Shepherdâ€™s Cross 16792 E. 450 R

918-342-5911 One thing is certain about the Pumpkin Festival at Shepherdâ€™s Cross â€” youâ€™re

not going to run out of things to do. The working farm has more

than 60 activities ranging from games and mazes to glimpses into the daily life

of the farm. Hours are 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday through Nov. 6.

Admission is by suggested donation of \$5 per person, with some activities having a

separate ticket. For more: [shepherdscross.com](http://shepherdscross.com) Livesay Orchards 39232 E. 231st St. South, Porter; 918-483-2102

Livesay Orchards turns its attention from peaches to pumpkins this time of year, offering such activities as a hay bale maze, farm-related learning centers, pumpkin games and more.

This year's corn maze is created in honor of Roy Essary, who was affectionately called "Farmer Roy" at Livesay Orchards, and who for many years operated the hay ride during the harvest season. The four-acre maze has two levels of challenge: one

for the youngsters, and a more complicated one for adults. Pumpkins and apples are

also available for picking. Hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays, 1-6 p.m. Sundays through

Oct. 31. It will also be open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Oct. 14-15. Tickets are

\$9, and advance purchase is recommended. To purchase and for more information: [livesayorchards.com](http://livesayorchards.com) Oklahoma

Heritage Farm Annual Fall Festival 38512 U.S. 75, Ramona; 918-371-7887 Enjoy more than 30

activities, from an 11-acre maze to a pumpkin cannon, giant slides to a paintball

gallery. Some activities require additional tickets, which are available for \$1 each, or 20

for \$18. Hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday-Friday; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday; 1-6 p.m.

Sunday through Oct. 31. General admission is \$8. For more information: [okheritagefarm.com](http://okheritagefarm.com). Halloween Festival

The Castle of Muskogee, 3400 W. Fern Mountain Road This Halloween, the Castle of

Muskogee offers seven ways to get in the Halloween spirit, including the family-friendly, low-scare-threshold

of the Halloween Train. Pony rides also are available for \$5. You can select

individual activities or purchase combo passes for multiple frights. Open Friday and Saturday evenings

through Oct. 30. [okcastle.com](http://okcastle.com) Video: Radish restaurant opens its doors in new location Stay

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