### 10 Facts about Halloween

### 1. Dressing up on Halloween comes from the Celts.

Celts believed Samhain was a time when the wall between our world and the paranormal world was porous and spirits could get through. Because of this belief, it was common for the [Celts to wear costumes and masks](http://www.history.com/topics/halloween) during the festival to ward off or befuddle any evil spirits.

### 2. The moniker "Halloween" comes from the Catholics.

Hallowmas is a three-day Catholic holiday where saints are honored and people pray for the recently deceased. At the start of the 11th century, it was decreed by the pope that it would last from Oct. 31 (All Hallow's Eve) until Nov. 2, most likely because that [was when Samhain was celebrated](http://www.history.com/topics/halloween) and the church was trying to convert the pagans.

"All Hallow's Eve" then evolved into "[All Hallow's Even](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/allsaints_1.shtml)," and by the 18th century it was commonly referred to as "[Hallowe'en](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/halloween)."

### 3. Halloween symbols aren't random.

Black cats, spiders, and bats are all Halloween symbols because of their spooky history and ties to Wiccans. All three were thought to be the familiars of witches in the middle ages, and are often associated with bad luck.

Bats are even further connected to Halloween by the ancient Samhain ritual of building a bonfire, which [drove away insects and attracted bats](http://voices.yahoo.com/symbolism-bats-halloween-other-times-of-4517579.html?cat=37).

### 4. Fears of poisoned Halloween candy are unfounded.

One of parents' biggest fears is that their child's Halloween candy is poisoned or contains razor blades.

In reality, this fear is almost entirely unfounded. There are only two known cases of poisoning, and both involved relatives, according to [LiveScience](http://www.livescience.com/8839-poisoned-halloween-candy-trick-treat-myth.html). In 1970, a boy died of a heroin overdose. The investigators found it on his candy, but in a twist they later discovered the boy had accidentally consumed some of his uncle's heroin stash, and the family had sprinkled some on the candy to cover up the incident.

Even more horrifically, in 1974 Timothy O'Bryan died after eating a Pixy Stix his father had laced with cyanide to collect on the insurance money, according to [Smithsonian Magazine](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Where-Did-the-Fear-of-Poisoned-Halloween-Candy-Come-From-228023541.html).

### 5. A full moon on Halloween is extremely rare.

Though a common trope in horror movies and Halloween decorations with witches flying across the full moon, the next full moon on Halloween [won't occur until 2020](http://blog.chicagoweathercenter.com/2012/10/22/ask-tom-when-is-the-next-time-there-will-be-a-full-moon-on-halloween/).

The most recent Halloween full moon was back in 2001, and before that it was in 1955.

### 6. Halloween is still the Wiccan New Year.

Halloween originates from a Celtic tradition called [Samhain](http://www.history.com/topics/halloween), a festival that marked the end of the Celtic calendar year in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. They believed it was a time that spirits or fairies could enter our world, and the Celts would put out treats and food to placate the spirits — sometimes, a place at the table was even set for the souls of the dead.

[Wiccans still celebrate Samhain](http://abcnews.go.com/WN/real-witches-practice-samhain-wicca-rise-us/story?id=8957950) as a New Year celebration today.

### 7. Trick-or-treating as we know it was re-popularized by cartoons.

Trick-or-treating was brought to America by the Irish and became popular during the early 20th century, but died out during WWII when sugar was rationed. After the rationing ended in 1947, children's magazine "Jack and Jill," radio program "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," and the "Peanuts" comic strip all helped to [re-popularize the tradition](http://www.history.com/topics/history-of-trick-or-treating) of dressing up in costumes and asking for candy from door-to-door.

By 1952, trick-or-treating was hugely popular again.

**8. Halloween is the second-most commercial American holiday of the year.**

The candy industry in America rakes in an average of [$2 billion annually](http://www.business2community.com/food-recipes/halloween-candy-americans-buy-90-million-pounds-chocolate-halloween-0613778%20) thanks to Halloween (that's 90 million pounds of chocolate).

Americans spend an estimated [$6 billion on Halloween annually](http://www.history.com/topics/history-of-trick-or-treating), including candy, costumes, and decorations, according to History.com. (The most commercial holiday in the U.S. is obviously Christmas.)

**9. Jack O’Lantern**

According to Irish legend, Jack O’Lanterns are named after a stingy man named Jack who, because he tricked the devil several times, was forbidden entrance into both heaven and hell. He was condemned to wander the Earth, waving his lantern to lead people away from their paths

**10. Owls**

The owl is a popular Halloween image. In Medieval Europe, owls were thought to be witches, and to hear an owl's call meant someone was about to die.

Roxy Eurich – D3 – Set B

A01025510