

Halloween trivia questions and answers

From conversationstartersworld.com/halloween-trivia-questions

What is the name of the Celtic harvest festival that many people believe Halloween is based on?

Samhain (Pronounced SAH-win or SOW-in)

There is some debate as to how many Samhain traditions made their way into the Christian holiday of Halloween. This is because the Celtic people had an oral rather than written tradition and so much about the life of druids and the traditions of the Celtic people has been lost.

Halloween is the eve of All Saints Day and we do know that All Saints Day was moved from May 13th to coincide with Samhain, which was held around October 31st to November 1st. By moving the Christian holiday to the date of a pagan festival converted pagans could keep celebrating their traditional holidays while still being Christians. So it wouldn't be surprising if newly converted pagans incorporated their old traditions into the Christian holiday.

What is a hallow?

A saint or a holy person

Hallow when used as an adjective means holy and as a noun it means someone who is holy. You can see why All Saint's Eve is also known as All Hallow's Eve.

In what year will the next full moon occur during Halloween?

2020

The last Halloween that had a full moon was in 2001 and the next full moon on Halloween after 2020 won't occur until 2039.

What item is banned only during Halloween from 12am October 31st to 12pm November 1st in Hollywood California?

Silly string

What popular fall festival activity did the Romans bring to Britain when they invaded?

Bobbing for apples (a.k.a apple ducking, duck apple, dooking)

Another variation was also played where apples were hung from strings and contestants would have to try and bite into them.

Halloween etymology

The word Halloween is a contraction of what Christian holiday?

All Hallow's Evening (All Hallows' Even), a.k.a All Hallows' Eve, All Saint's Eve, Allhalloween

In Scots "eve" is "even". The "v" was eventually dropped, as well as the "all" and the "s" in Hallow's. So All Hallow's Even became Halloween. Halloween is the day before All Hallow's Day (also known as All Saints Day) and is the first day of Allhallowtide which is a three-day celebration for Christian Saints.

In the correct spelling of the Halloween, where is the apostrophe placed?

Between the two e's (Hallowe'en)

The apostrophe shows where the "v" was dropped from (All) Hallow('s) E(v)en = Hallowe'en. "Even" in Scots means "Evening".

Trick-or-treating

In what two countries was "guising", the tradition of dressing up in costumes, and going door for food or coins for Halloween most popular?

Scotland and Ireland

Guising during Hallowmas, the Christian holiday that Halloween kicks off, has been going at least since the 16th century in Scotland. Guising along with souling are thought by many to be the origins of modern day trick-or-treating.

When people go house to house while “souling”, what do they ask for?

Soul-cakes

Souling goes back at least to the 15th century and involves people going from house to house singing for soul-cakes during Halloween. Soul-cakes are small round cakes that are baked to commemorate the dead. Even though souling didn't involve dressing up in costumes (like guising) you can see why many people think it had a strong influence on the trick-or-treating that we do today.

In what country was the first written account of children using the phrase “trick or treat” on Halloween?

Canada

Here is the line from the newspaper:

“The youthful tormentors were at back door and front demanding edible plunder by the word “trick or treat” to which the inmates gladly responded and sent the robbers away rejoicing.”

“Trick or Treat' Is Demand,” Herald (Lethbridge, Alberta), November 4, 1927, p. 5, dateline Blackie, Alberta, Nov. 3.

In what decade did trick-or-treating as we know it today start gaining popularity in America?

The 1930s

While there were mentions of souling and guising in the USA earlier than the 1930s it wasn't until the mid to late 1930s that we started to see the phrase trick-or-treat being used in print in the USA.

How many children have been seriously injured or killed from poisoned candy given to them by strangers during Halloween?

Zero

There have been a few cases of family members tampering with candy and blaming it on strangers. There have also been numerous false alarms where an illness was thought to be caused from Halloween candy but later was discovered to be something else entirely. Also there have been a tiny number of instances of sharp objects put into candy by strangers. But luckily no one has ever been seriously hurt by one of those objects.

Jack o' lanterns and pumpkins

What were the original jack o' lanterns made from?

Turnips (also mangel wurzels and possibly rutabagas)

Jack o' lantern refers to a light that is sometimes seen in bogs or marshes. It was explained in Irish folklore as being Stingy Jack who avoided hell by tricking the devil but was denied entry into heaven due to his sins. He now has to wander the earth and lights his way with an ember from hell held within a turnip or rutabaga.

In what country did carving jack o' lanterns originate?

Ireland

Just like today, faces were carved into the turnips and a candle was put inside. They were used to frighten people and to drive away evil spirits.

The round orange pumpkins that are used for most jack o' lanterns today are native to what continent?

North America

The oldest pumpkin-related seeds were found in Mexico and were dated to sometime between 7000 and 5500 BC.

What country holds the title for the World's heaviest pumpkin?

Switzerland

In 2014 Beni Meier of Switzerland grew a pumpkin that weighed a whopping 2,378 pounds. That record still stands at the time of this article (September 2016).

Halloween by the numbers

Sources for these statistics from [National Retail Federation](#) and the [National Confectioners Association](#)

How much are American consumers expected to spend on Halloween in 2016? (Plus or minus 500 million dollars)

8.4 billion

Halloween is second only to Christmas for holiday consumer spending.

What candy is the SECOND most popular Halloween candy?

Candy corn

Chocolate dominates first place by a wide margin.

What percent of American parents say they DON'T eat some of their children's candy? (plus or minus 5%)

22%

Seems a little too large of a percentage, but then I guess some of the survey takers might not have been totally honest.

In the USA how many pieces of candy are most commonly handed out to trick-or-treaters?

2 pieces

Two pieces were most common at 50%, next up being three pieces at 22%.

In terms of parties held in the USA, Halloween is third. What two days have more parties than Halloween?

New Year's Eve and the Super Bowl

What percentage of Americans plan to celebrate Halloween in 2016? (plus or minus 5%)

69%

Halloween costumes

What was the most popular Halloween costume for adults in 2015?

Witch

Next up was an animal of some type, followed by characters from Batman. Fourth place was a zombie and in fifth place were characters from the Star Wars universe.

What was the most popular Halloween costume for pets in 2015?

Pumpkin

Next up was hot dog, undoubtedly the top pick for dachshund owners. Third were characters from the Batman franchise, followed by devil. And for 5th place, bumble bees.

In what American state is it illegal to dress up like a priest or a nun?

Alabama

Here's the wording of the law:

Section 13A-14-4

Fraudulently pretending to be clergyman.

Whoever, being in a public place, fraudulently pretends by garb or outward array to be a minister of any religion, or nun, priest, rabbi or other member of the clergy, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$500.00 or confinement in the county jail for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment. (Acts 1965, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 273, p. 381; Code 1975, Â§13-4-99.)

Halloween monsters

Where did Mary Shelley get the idea for Frankenstein's monster?

A dream

The inspiration for the book was from a dream. But the reason for writing story was a competition suggested by Lord Byron to a group of friends and associates. They were competing to see who could write the best ghost story.

As a side note, the first vampire story written in English titled The Vampyre was also written for the competition by Lord Byron's physician.

In the Middle Ages why were so many mummies bought and sold?

To be ground into medicine

Mummies were ground up during the middle ages to make medicine because they were thought to have healing properties.

After the Middle Ages the buying and selling of mummies remained popular. During the 17th and 18th century mummies were used to make a type of paint called mummy brown or mummia.

During the 19th century mummies were bought for parties during which a mummy would be unwrapped and examined by the guests.

What was Bram Stoker's original name for Dracula?

Count Wampyr

He changed the name from Wampyr to Dracula after he borrowed the book An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia from the library in Witby in 1890 during his summer vacation.

Source: A Dracula Handbook By Elizabeth Miller

What was the first feature length werewolf movie?

Werewolf of London released by Universal Pictures in 1935

There was an earlier silent era film titled the Werewolf released in 1913 by Universal Films. But it's runtime was only 18 minutes, far from feature length, and no copies remain.

You could probably count that one if someone got it, but it's definitely a deep cut, just thought I'd mention it in case you or someone you are quizzing is a serious film buff.

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