

Hallowe'en



On the night of October 31, in the UK and U.S., the festival of **Hallowe'en** is celebrated. Although it was previously associated with the belief that the souls of the dead would return home on that date, now **Hallowe'en** is just an excuse for costume parties and the traditional **trick-or-treat**, a custom where children disguised as ghosts or witches, take a hollow pumpkin with a candle from house to house and threaten the neighbours with a joke if they do not give money or sweets^{Brit. Eng.} candy^{Am. Eng.}.

En la noche del 31 de octubre se celebra en el Reino Unido Y en EE.UU. la festividad de Hallowe'en. Aunque antes estaba asociada a la creencia de que las almas de los difuntos regresaban sus hogares en esa fecha, actualmente Hallowe'en no es más que una excusa para celebrar fiestas de disfraces y el tradicional trick or treat, una costumbre en la que los niños, disfrazados de fantasmas o brujas, llevan una calabaza hueca con una vela de casa en casa y amenazan al vecino con gastarle una broma si no les dan dinero o golosinas.

Trivia

- o Halloween originated from a Celtic festival. Celts were an ancient European tribe.
- o Halloween is second only to Christmas in spending in the United States. People there spend as much as \$2.5 billion during Halloween on candies^{Am. Eng.}, costumes, decorations and parties.
- o Druids worshipped Samhain (pronounced: sawín), the Lord of the Dead or the Lord of Darkness. The Druid New Year began on November 1st and Lord Samhain was believed to reign over the long winter months.
- o It is believed that the Irish began the tradition of Trick-or-Treating. In preparation for All Hallow's Eve, Irish townsfolk would visit neighbours and ask for contributions of food for a feast in the town.
- o Why pumpkins? According to an Irish legend a man called "Stingy Jack" invited the Devil to have a drink with him and then didn't want to pay. Jack tricked the Devil into climbing a tree to pick some fruit. While the devil was up the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree. The Devil couldn't come down until he promised not to bother Jack for ten more years. Soon thereafter, Jack died and God would not allow such a person into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him would not allow Jack into hell. So Jack had to wander the earth between heaven and hell with only a burning piece of coal in a carved out turnip to light his way. The story came to America with Irish immigrants in the mid nineteenth century. As pumpkins were cheaper and more common than turnips in America, carving them and making them into Jack-O-Lanterns lit by a candle inside became an American tradition.