

In October many shop windows in Britain turn orange and black, with pumpkins, witches, broomsticks and cats. What do young people do to celebrate Halloween? Read this article to find out.

Flying witches, pumpkin lanterns, trick or treat ... What do you know about Halloween? Here are some Halloween facts to get started.

- Halloween is celebrated on 31 October. This isn't a public holiday in Britain.
- Halloween is the night before the Catholic festival of All Saints and the pagan Celtic festival of Samhain (1 November).
- Halloween is also sometimes called All Hallows' Eve or All Hallowtide and can also be written Hallowe'en.
- Halloween colours are orange and black. Orange is related to harvests because the end of October is the end of the harvest. Black is related to death.

In the UK Halloween traditions are very much alive and popular, especially amongst kids and teenagers. We looked at some of the most common.

Pumpkin lanterns

These are pumpkins with the inside removed and eyes, mouth and a nose cut into one side. A candle is placed inside the empty pumpkin and the light creates a scary face effect. In the past people used potatoes or turnips to make lanterns but nowadays pumpkins are more popular. They are easier to cut and you can buy them in supermarkets. People use pumpkin lanterns to decorate their homes at Halloween. Do people actually eat their pumpkins? Yes, they do! Pumpkin soup and pumpkin curry are very popular meals at this time of year.

Apple bobbing

To play this game, lots of apples are placed in a large tub or bowl of water. The competitors have to take a bite from one of the apples without using their hands. To make this more difficult, the competitors have their eyes covered with a scarf. You are not allowed to use the sides of the bowl to help you bite the apple. This game often involves getting very wet so it's a good idea to bring a towel!

Apple bobbing may be related to the ancient Roman festival of remembering the dead, which was also in October. The Romans remembered the goddess of trees and fruit, called Pomona. When they came to the UK, about 2,000 years ago, they continued with this tradition.

Dressing up

People of all ages dress up on Halloween. The most popular fancy dress costumes include witches, vampires, ghosts, skeletons, zombies and monsters. You can buy a costume from a shop or you can make your own one at home. It's easy to make a ghost costume from an old white sheet or wear black clothes to look like a witch. You can even paint 'blood' dripping from your mouth using bright red tomato ketchup to look like a vampire! What would you choose? Rachel, 14, from Liverpool says, 'If you go trick or treating it's best to dress up as a witch. You don't need a bag for the sweets – you can just use your witch's hat!'

Trick or treating

Children dress up and then visit the houses in their neighbourhood asking for a 'trick or treat'. The neighbour gives them sweets or money as a 'treat'. If there is no treat, the children play a trick on the neighbour, for example they might throw soap at the window. Some people think that playing tricks is unkind but luckily there is nearly always a treat. This custom is imported from the USA and is more popular with young people than with adults. The police in some parts of Britain give out 'No trick or treat, please!' posters for people to display on their door if they don't want to join in. Young children usually go trick or treating with parents or an older brother or sister.

Halloween parties

If you are in Sheffield, in the north of England, at the end of October you can go to Fright Night. What is Fright Night? People in Sheffield say it's 'Britain's Biggest Halloween Party' and it attracts about 40,000 people each year. There are activities for kids, teenagers and adults including a fancy dress catwalk, urban dance, a monster in the fountain and a zombie garden, as well as the traditional apple bobbing and a competition for the best pumpkin lantern. If you don't have a big Halloween party in your area, some people have parties at home or at youth clubs where they dress up and play scary games or tell ghost stories.

Watch a horror film

Not in the mood for a Halloween party? Older teenagers that aren't helping their younger sisters and brothers to trick or treat sometimes watch a scary film with friends either at home or at the cinema. Any film with the words 'Halloween', 'Vampire', 'Dead' or 'Zombie' in the title is probably going to be quite scary.

In the UK films are divided into categories depending on whether they are for children, teens or adults. 'U' films are suitable for all ages, '15' films are for people aged 15 or over and '18' films are for adults only. Many cinemas in the UK show old black-and-white, classic horror films such as *Psycho* on the night of 31 October. Interestingly, you needed to be over 18 to see *Psycho* at the cinema in 1960. Now, though, the film has a '15' rating.

Happy Halloween!