26 Not-So-Scary Facts About Halloween - mental_floss List Show (Ep.228)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=-cBhVTafGkM
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/-cBhVTafGkM

Hi I'm John Green, welcome to my salon; this is Mental Floss on Youtube, and I am being made to wear a series of animal masks because I have failed to find adequate support for the Pork Chop Party fund and I am being punished by my employees.

Also it's Halloween. By the way did you know the fear of Halloween is known as samhainophobia? Well, that's the first of many facts about Halloween I am going to share with you today, so if you have samhainophobia you should probably look away.

lightning strike *spooky theme song*

Halloween is technically a Christian term, it translates to Hallowed Evening or Holy Evening. Now you've probably heard it referred to as All Hallows Eve before. The letter 'N' at the end of the word Halloween actually came from the Scots language where 'even' means eve.

Trick-or-treating may have evolved from from an old English tradition; it started around the year 1,000 A.D. On November second, children would go door-to-door with something called Soul Cakes. The children would sing and hand these cakes to people in their communities.

So naturally that eventually evolved into children taking candy because children were like 'you know what's better than giving away cakes? Cakes.'

Gourds, turnips, and beets were the original vegetables carved to make jack-o-lanterns, but in the Americas, pumpkins are much more common so European immigrants used them instead.

Which is great because it allows me to share a few facts about pumpkins.

The largest pumpkin of all time grew in California in 2013; it weighed 2,032 pounds and blossomed for a hundred five days.

The world's largest jack-o-lantern was a little smaller but still pretty big, weighing in at 1,469 pounds. It was carved in Pennsylvania in 2005.

And now I have turned into a kitten to tell you that the largest display of lit jack-o-lanterns occurred in Keene, New Hampshire where 30,581 were put on display in 2013.

I have to say, I dramatically prefer being a kitten to being a pig. Anyway, Native Americans used to use pumpkins to treat bladder, digestive and kidney problems.

And from 1863 to 1936, pumpkin seeds were considered an effective treatment for parasites in the intestines in the United States. These days of course, yea, no, that does not work.

But some people still argue that pumpkins can help with one's cholesterol levels after menopause. No, not Mental Floss, MENOPAUSE.

All of this is particularly surprising when you consider that 90% of a pumpkin is water.

Now if you've every watched *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* and felt bad when Charlie Brown receives rocks instead of candy, you're not alone. In fact, viewers mailed in a bunch of candy and cookies for Charlie Brown when the program first aired in 1966, back before people knew that cartoons are fictional.

And speaking of candy, Candy Corn used to be called Chicken Feed, the slogan that Goelitz Confectionery Company used to advertise it, was, "Something worth crowing for!".

By the way, if you want to celebrate candy corn on a day separate from Halloween, National Candy Corn Day is the day before: October 30th.

And now I am a zebra. Mark, remind me to never forgive you for this.

According to daylight savings expert, Michael Downing, the candy industry pushed to move daylight savings time to November so that we can have as much light as possible on Halloween. In 1985 when the senate was discussing daylight savings time, the candy industry put a candy pumpkin on every seat in the senate.

We don't know exactly why orange and black represent Halloween, but most think it's because orange symbolizes harvest and black symbolizes death.

Moving on to Halloween legends, some believe that if you put your clothes on inside out on Halloween then walk backwards, you'll encounter a witch at midnight! Which is actually true, that's not a legend, Meredith. You know that...That's true.

It's said that if girls put the apple they bobbed for under their pillow, they'll dream of the man they're going to marry. Maybe if you're really good, you'll dream of him wearing a zebra mask. Speaking of which, Mark, can I move on to the giraffe please?

Oh yeah, that's better. I've always loved giraffes. Anyway, there's also an old Western European story, about the origin of the Jack-O-Lantern. In it, a man named Stingy Jack tricks the devil, although the actual trick varies according to the story. It's a bit of a complicated story, but it works out that Jack can't get into Heaven or get into Hell, so the devil ends up giving him a burning coal that he puts inside of a turnip. And Jack-O-Lanterns.

And finding a spider on Halloween is actually considered good luck. Some say the spider is actually someone you know who's died who's taken spider form to say hello to you. Maybe the spider is even Harry Houdini who famously did not believe in ghosts, and who died on Halloween.

Back to bobbing for apples for a moment if I may. In the UK the game is also referred to as, like: Snap Apple, Dooking, Apple Ducking, and also Duck-apple.

Silly String has been a major cause of property damage in Los Angeles on Halloween, so it is now banned on that holiday. In fact the use, possession, sale or distribution of Silly String is punishable by up to a thousand dollar fine.

If you're familiar with the fight or flight phenomenon, you can probably guess that haunted houses are extremely dangerous for the actors who work there to scare you because sometimes ya don't flight - ya fight. The most common reports we came across involved punches, and therefore breaks, to the nose.

There is also an evangelical Christian take on the haunted house; the "Hell House". Rather than being like, uh, you know, attacked by ghouls, customers there go through a house that shows them what happens if they sin.

According to a study done in 2000 that examined hundreds of kids' Halloween costumes, only 8.7% of costumes were gender neutral. The most common costumes for girls were princesses and then beauty queens. The most boy costumes; death themed or superheroes.

And finally I return to my salon to tell you that the last time we had a full moon on Halloween was in 2001 and the next time we'll see one is in 2020. It turns out that th-- it's a pretty rare occurrence!

Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube which is made with the help of all of these nice people, who made me wear a giraffe mask and ergo are no longer considered particularly nice by me. We appreciate you watching, enjoy Halloween, stay safe, and as we say in my home town - don't forget to be spooky!