

HALLOWEEN GUIDE





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Dressing up your Pet? Safety First!

Is there anything cuter than a dog dressed up for Halloween?

From bumblebees to ghosts, pooch costumes abound on social media this time of year. And for good reason. As long as your dog is comfortable in his costume, it's an adorable way to get him involved in your Halloween festivities.

Pet costumes continue to

gain popularity, with nearly 20% of Americans dressing their pets in costumes in 2018, according to the National Retail Federation. So this year, don't forget to include Fido when you go out shopping for the perfect Halloween outfits for your family.

Here are the top-ranked pet costumes from last year from the NRF: pumpkin, 1.2%; hot dog, 7.4%; bumblebee, 4.9%; devil, 3.2%; cat, 3.1%; dog, 3.1%; lion, 2.9%; Star Wars character, 2.8%; superhero,

2.7%; and ghost, 2.5%

Remember that the key to a great Halloween costume is creativity, so don't be afraid to stray from the list above.

SAFETY FIRST

No matter what you decide to dress Fido in this year, remember that his safety and comfort level are of the utmost importance. Consider what the costume is made from and how it fits the pet to make sure you're not putting them in something that will cause

stress or injuries.

Here are some tips from the pet safety site Petful.com:

Find a costume that fits just right — not too tight and not too loose. The dog should be able to sit, walk and use the bathroom normally without the costume getting in the way.

Make sure the costume does not impair the dog's senses. Keep the mouth, whiskers, eyes and ears free.

Choose scent-free. A dog's sense of smell is very sensitive

so avoid costumes that smell of chemicals, plastic or other strong odors to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed or sick.

Do not use flammable materials.

Avoid chewable parts. Buttons and pins are choking hazards, so be sure to play it safe by using Velcro or other safe fasteners.

Limit how long they wear the costume, especially if it's an unseasonably warm on Halloween day.

Spooky Treats

When it comes to adding a little creativity to your Halloween party treats, just think orange. A little color goes a long way and takes your dessert game to the next spooky level.

Your guests will love your themed treats as you make your party one to remember. Here are a few ideas to kickstart your Halloween goody plans.

CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN CAKE

Give your cake an orange and black twist for Halloween. Start by baking a plain chocolate cake and cutting it into layers. Next, add orange and black icing between the sheets for a layered, colorful — and not to mention delicious — dessert. You can likely find these themed icing options at your local grocer. If not, find white icing and add food coloring.

JACK-O'-LANTERN FLOATS

Find some orange soda to put a Halloween spin on the traditional float. All you'll need are vanilla ice cream, orange soda and some festive plastic cups.

Pour a small amount of soda into the bottom of each cup.

Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top.

Pour more orange soda over the ice cream.

Enjoy!

DIRT & WORMS

Try to find orange worms to give it a Halloween flair, or add orange chocolate candies into the middle of the dessert for some crunch.

Here's what you'll need for this quick, easy recipe:

12 chocolate cream-filled sandwich cookies

1 package instant chocolate pudding mix

2 cups milk

1 package gummy worms candy

First, crush the chocolate sandwich cookies into crumbs. Next, whisk together the chocolate pudding mix with the milk in a bowl. Sprinkle about half of the crushed sandwich cookie crumbs into the bottom of a serving bowl and spoon the chocolate pudding over the crumbs.

Then top with the rest of the chocolate cookie crumbs to make the dessert look like dirt. Poke the gummy worms halfway into the dirt. Refrigerate and serve for a fun, messy dessert.



Halloween Spending

Halloween retail spending was estimated at \$9 billion in 2018, according to the National Retail Federation's annual survey.

That number is down from 2017 (\$9.1 billion), but with the average American spending nearly \$90 on celebrating Halloween, the holiday is a true money-maker.

Here is an interesting chart from the NRF highlighting American spending trends over the past six years:

Year	Americans Celebrating	Average Spending	Total Spending
2012	170 million	\$79.82	\$8.0 billion
2013	158 million	\$75.03	\$6.9 billion
2014	162 million	\$77.52	\$7.4 billion
2015	157 million	\$74.34	\$6.9 billion
2016	171 million	\$82.93	\$8.4 billion
2017	179 million (Record)	\$86.13	\$9.1 billion (record)
2018	175 million	\$86.79 (Record)	\$9.0 billion*

WHAT WE BUY

According to the NRF, about 90% of Americans will buy candy for Halloween, spending \$2.6 billion. Almost 75% will purchase Halloween decor, spending \$2.7 billion.

The most expensive part of Halloween is costumes. Just under 70% of Americans spent \$3.2 billion on them in 2018. According to the National Retail Federation, the top five costumes in 2018 for adults were a witch, vampire, zombie, pirate and Avengers character. The top five for children were princess, superhero, Batman, Star Wars character and witch.

SHOP FOR COSTUMES LOCALLY TO SAVE MONEY

Halloween is the perfect holiday for thrifty shoppers. Check out your local secondhand stores for costume ideas or party favors. You'll be surprised at what you can find if you come into the store with a plan.

Here's an example. Are you thinking of dressing like a scarecrow this Halloween? Check out your local thrift store to find the perfect, affordable flannel and overalls instead of purchasing a more expensive costume online. You may even be able to hunt down a great-fitting hat to give the costume its final touch.



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Grow the Perfect Pumpkin

What good is Halloween without the perfect pumpkin to show off on your front porch? From trick-or-treaters to your neighbors, you'll be the talk of the town with quality pumpkins lining the walk up to your home.

What's the perfect pumpkin for you? Maybe it's an oversized traditional orange pumpkin that you can carve with the kids. Maybe it's a smaller, multi-colored gourd that you can use inside or outside for a nice decorating touch. Whatever your preference, there are some tried and true tips to growing the perfect pumpkin for the Halloween season.

GROWING TIPS

Your first step is choosing the sunniest place in your yard for your pumpkin patch. They need a lot of sun, so pick a spot away from trees or outdoor structures.

Pumpkins are also sensitive to the elements. Be sure to protect them from wind, frost and critters looking for a snack. Be prepared to cover them during heavy rains or high winds with plastic or other barriers.

Water is also critical to the healthy growth of pumpkins.



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When it comes to soil, look for good, well-drained dirt that you can dig up by hand.

WHEN TO PLANT

If you're looking to get the most bang for your buck, prepare your soil early in the spring when the ground

begins to warm. Cover the patch with a few inches of fertilizer, as pumpkins see their best growth in soil that is slightly acidic. If you don't have access to manure for fertilizer, check with your local landscaping company for any natural alternatives.

MAINTENANCE

Growing the perfect pumpkin requires regular maintenance, especially during the early stages of growth. When two or three fruits on each plant reach the size of softballs, it's time to start pruning your plants. Remove all but

the most promising fruit by gently pruning them from the main plant. Then, after the primary vine has reached 20 feet, break off all the other flowers to let the main fruit grow without the other flowers stealing valuable nutrients or water.

Best Trick-or-Treating Tips

Trick-or-treating can be one of the most fun experiences for children growing up. It can also be potentially dangerous if parents aren't paying attention.

The keys to a safe, memorable and candy-filled night is preparation and vigilance.

Always supervise your young children when they are trick-or-treating. If they are older and more responsible, make sure they are traveling in a large group with an easy way to contact parents.

Read on for other trick-or-treating safety tips and be sure to implement them into your plans this year.

PLAN OUT YOUR NIGHT

Depending on where and when you plan to trick or treat, make sure you're being realistic about your child's experience. Remember that even though your kids have a lot of energy, their bodies aren't able to withstand the same workload as adults.

Keep their little legs in mind when you're mapping out which houses or shopping centers you will be visiting. Knowing where you're going will also help you stay on track and not end up lost in a neighborhood you're not familiar with.

STAY OUT OF THE DARK

One of the most important safety tips for trick-or-treating is to remain visible. Many towns make their trick-or-treating hours during the early evening hours to make sure it's not too dark when children start walking around neighborhoods with their parents.

If it does happen to get dark during your hunt for candy, have some flash-



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lights handy for extra light. If you're riding bicycles around town, be sure to have bright reflectors on your bike spokes. This will help give others a clear visual on where you are.

CHECK THEIR BAGS

When your kids get home to check

their loot, be sure to give it a thorough review. Find and throw away any candy that is opened or not in its original wrapper.

If you have younger children, make sure they are not opening and eating candy they could choke on.

Check for any candy that may

include allergens, such as peanuts or wheat, to ensure your kids stay safe while enjoying their candy bounty.

And don't forget to take advantage of one of the biggest parenting perks: Being a quality assurance candy taste-tester after the kids go to bed on Halloween night.



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Halloween Wedding

For fans of all things scary, a Halloween wedding can be the perfect way to celebrate the beginning of a new — hopefully fearless — life together.

Many brides and grooms decide to tie the knot on Halloween every year. Think of the materials you could creatively infuse into your wedding celebration. From pumpkins, cobwebs to vines and other spooky touches, the options are endless.

ATTIRE

When it comes to your wedding dress, think ivory or white with dark embellishments. Even if you're not exactly the gothic type, there are ways

to make your dress stand out with simple touches. Think long, dark gloves or antique jewelry to help set the Halloween mood. Get creative with a silky sash or black wedding veil.

For your wedding party, think charcoal, burgundy, black or plum. For the guys, a modern top hat is a great way to finish a classic black tux with pops of your wedding colors.

However you decide to dress your Halloween wedding party, don't lose the fun and spontaneity of the holiday by

overthinking it. Use a local wedding planner to help you focus on the most important part of the day: marrying your best friend!

MAKEUP

Go bold and dramatic with your makeup for a true Halloween feel. Use a local makeup artist to give you darker smoky eyes or a deep plum lip color. Stick with one or the other to avoid a look that is overdone. Let your natural beauty shine with a light makeup application that accentuates your face shape and cheek structure.

RECEPTION

You are limited only by your own

creativity when it comes to decking out your reception hall with decorations.

Think thick black linens or velvet to accent your venue. Black and plum-colored tablecloths can tie the room together, and don't forget to complement the design scheme with your wedding colors. Add a modern cocktail bar or dessert table with colors and decor that provides a classic, spooky ambiance.

Photo booths are always a popular reception extra. Craft a themed booth with a dark curtain for the backdrop and add fake spiderwebs. Don't forget props like hats and gloves to provide some extra photo fun.

The Perfect Halloween Party

When the weather begins to cool, the fall party season heats up! From the food to the festivities, there are many ways to customize your Halloween shindig. Use a little creative thinking to throw your best party yet.

Here are some ideas to set your party apart from the rest.

COSTUME TROPHIES

What Halloween party would be complete without a costume party? Urge your guests to dress up in their spookiest outfits. Or come up with a theme to give your guests some direction.

Pass out awards for all sorts of costume divisions, including cutest costume, scariest costume or funniest costume. And instead of simply handing out bragging rights, let your guests compete for actual prizes. Affix a plastic skeleton to a wood base and spray them gold for the perfect little spooky costume trophy. Give the kiddos candy-filled gift bags for their efforts so no one goes home empty handed.

PUMPKIN VASES

Looking for a great way to outfit your home with Halloween-focused decora-



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tions? Look no further than our favorite fall item, the pumpkin.

Transform miniature pumpkins into perfect vases for mums and dahlias. Simply chop the top off the pumpkin and place a hidden vase inside. Fill the vase with water and your favorite flowers to

make this pretty pumpkin creation. Pink and purple flowers pop out of a white gourd vase with vibrant colors. If you're using an orange pumpkin vase, think complementary colors to give it more depth.

FUN GAMES

It's easy to give your favorite

party games a Halloween makeover. Get creative when putting together your collection of activities.

Try pin the spider by taping up a large photo or poster of a spiderweb. Blindfold your guests and give them small paper spiders with double-sided tape to stick on the

photo. The person who gets their spider closest to the center of the web wins.

Have your guests bob for apples and then let them decorate their own delicacy at your caramel apple bar, complete with sprinkles, chocolate fudge and other delicious items.