

Halloween GUIDE





Six Easy Costumes

You've left your Halloween costume to the last minute. Again. Don't worry. We've got six easy costumes that everyone's got time for.

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ROSIE THE RIVETER

The heroine of World War II just takes your favorite jeans, a denim or chambray shirt, a red bandana and a bright red lip. Oh, and her signature guns-out pose. Rosie definitely rides to the rescue this Halloween.

RAINCLOUD

Take your favorite umbrella and cover it with cotton batting. Cut some raindrops out of blue construction paper and affix with fishing string, curly ribbon, twine or whatever you have on hand. Don

your galoshes and off you go.

SMARTY PANTS

Get thee to the candy aisle (and pick up the loot for trick-or-treaters while you're there) and grab some Smarties. Put on a comfy outfit, stick the Smarties to your pants and grab your jack-o-lantern because you are D-O-N-E.

BAT

This one requires you to sacrifice a black umbrella, but that's OK because you're going to look fabulous. Take your favorite black hood-

ie. Cut the umbrella in half and use safety pins to attach the halves to the arms of your hoodie. Wrap the hinges of the umbrella in black electrical tape so they'll fold properly. You can put ears on the hood cut from black construction paper or foam core, whatever you have in the craft box. Add black leggings and you're a bat.

MISS UNIVERSE

Find a fancy party dress in the back of your closet. Cut out construction paper planets (or have the kids do this one for you) and aliens.

Make a sash out of wax paper, ribbon or whatever you have on hand, and write Miss Universe on it. Don your tiara and, for bonus points, tote around a stupidly large bouquet of flowers. Fake is fine. Here she is, Miss Universe!

PUNK ROCK

Halloween is for posers. Rip a tee to shreds, destroy an entire stick of black eyeliner and make your hair stick on end. Top it off with a pile of costume jewelry and a denim jacket. Fingerless gloves are optional, safety pins are not.

Old-Fashioned Fall Treats

Nothing brings back childhood memories like crisp fall days and candy-filled pumpkins.

Give your Halloween a taste of yesteryear with these vintage autumn treats.

POPCORN BALLS

Ingredients

7 quarts popped plain popcorn
1 cup sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup water
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Food coloring, optional

Directions

1. Place the popcorn in a large baking pan and keep warm in a 200-degree oven.
2. In a heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup, water and salt. Cook over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 235 degrees, or the soft-ball stage.
3. Remove from heat. Add the butter, vanilla and food coloring, if using, and stir until the butter is melted. Immediately pour over popcorn and stir until evenly coated.
4. When the mixture is cool enough to handle, quickly shape into 3-inch balls. Dip your hands in cold water to prevent sticking.

CANDIED APPLES

Ingredients

15 apples
2 cups white sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1 1/2 cups water

8 drops red food coloring

Directions

1. Lightly grease cookie sheets and insert craft sticks into whole, stemmed apples.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine sugar, corn syrup and water. Heat to 300-310 degrees, or until a small amount of syrup dropped into cold water

forms hard, brittle threads. Remove from heat and stir in food coloring.

3. Holding the apple by its stick, dip in the syrup and turn to coat evenly. Place on prepared sheets to harden.

ROASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

Ingredients

1 pound hulled green pumpkin

seeds (pepitas)

1 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 tablespoon tamari sauce
2 teaspoons garlic powder
Salt, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Mix pumpkin seeds, olive oil, chili powder, tamari and garlic powder

in a resealable gallon bag. Seal bag and knead to coat the seeds. Spread the seeds on a baking sheet in an even layer.

3. Bake in a preheated oven for 15 minutes, then turn seeds. Bake until lightly toasted and fragrant, about 15 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with salt. Cool before serving; store in an airtight container.



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Pet Costumes

Halloween is the time of year when anything can become anything else. This year, dogs, cats and even birds are getting in on the costume fun.

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Here's what you need to know before you get costumed for Halloween this year.

CHOOSING A COSTUME

Pet costumes are absolutely adorable. But it's important to make sure that they're also comfortable and safe for your pet. Make sure your pet can move freely and communicate (bark, meow, squawk or squeak, as the case may be).

Make sure the costume is safe and non-toxic. Avoid dangling accessories or accessories small enough to be

chewed or swallowed.

Get your pet used to the costume by letting them wear it around the house while offering lots of praise and treats. If you're going to an event with other animals, be aware that animals often communicate through body language, and the costume may get in the way of that. Be closely aware of your pet the entire time.

If you're dressing up, too, make sure your pet sees you in the costume before you leave so they aren't startled or scared. They should know it's really you the entire time.

POPULAR COSTUMES

This year, with the "DC League of Super Pets" movie atop the box office, super hero costumes are super popular. You can find Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman costumes in stores. Dinosaurs and other animals are also ever popular, as are Star Wars characters. New this year are mail carrier and UPS costumes, which is particularly funny if your pooch has a favorite delivery driver.

If your pet is uncomfortable with a full costume, look for ones that are more simple, such as a pair of butter-

fly wings they wear like a harness. Even a seasonal bandana would work if they're skittish, or putting them in a pet stroller and decorating that.

TRICK OR TREAT

Remember not to treat your pets with human candy, particularly chocolate, which can be toxic. Keep your human treats well away from any prying furry noses (or beaks). Instead, bring their favorite pet-specific treats with you and if someone wants to treat your pup, offer them that instead.



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Festive DIY Halloween Decor

Now that we've got costumes for the family, including the pets, it's time to costume the house, too. Keep reading for some easy ways to DIY your own Halloween decor.

WEBS GALORE

Pop up a spooky arched entry with some branches and stretchy spider webs. Anchor the two branches on either side of your sidewalk or walkway. Tie the ends together with garden twine, then cover your arch with stretchy webs. Hang spiders and other creepy crawlies off the arch for more scares.

WITCHY WAYS

Cut witch's hats out of black construction paper and add them to family portraits. It also works with bats, mice and other spooky critters. For the front door, grab a florist's foam wreath of any size that works for your door and fill it with black feathers (or purple, or orange. It's your wreath). Or use a gang

of plastic spiders or rats. Let your imagination run creepy.

GOOGLY GOURDS

Grab some decorative seasonal gourds on your next grocery run. Affix googly eyes and arrange them in groups around the porch, table, mantle or anywhere else that needs a dose of spooky silliness.

WHAT A WEB

Use black twine to make a giant spider's web on any available wall space. Add foam spiders and other creepies as needed.

CANDY CORN CANDLES

Some may say this is the only acceptable use of candy corn. Take clear glass

hurricanes or cylinders and fill about a third of the way with candy corn. Nest a white candle in the center of each. The candy will hold the candles up. Note: Don't leave the lit candles unattended. Sugar is still flammable.

WHAT CARVING?

Wrap your pumpkin in gauze bandages. Put on leftover googly eyes from the gourds. Mummy pumpkin, coming right up!

BUBBLE, BUBBLE

Make your Halloween punch extra scary. Put orange and red tissue squares on top of a grapevine wreath. Nestle a black cauldron bowl on top of the paper (it should look like flames) and pour in your favorite punch. Add



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dry ice for the smoke.

WINE BOTTLE CANDLESTICKS

Recycle those bottles by painting them matte black and adding taper candles (drippy or not) for a ghoulishly clever and chic Halloween look.

Halloween Candies

Talk about spooky.

Earlier this year, there was talk of a Halloween shortage, but candymaker Hershey says it's got more than enough candy to meet demand despite milk prices and ingredient shortages.

Here's the lowdown on latest in Halloween treats.

NEW THIS YEAR

The Mars family of brands will release three new products for Halloween — ghoulish green bars for Snickers and Twix, and an M&M's Mad Scientist Mix. The M&M's mix brings together milk chocolate, peanut butter and peanut M&M's in one bag. Look for the new products this fall.

Red Vines is debuting a candy corn flavored candy this year in a special autumn-patterned bag. This limited-edition candy is available only for Halloween.

Nerds Candy Corn isn't your grandma's candy corn. Each Nerd Candy Corn kernel has a candy shell with a soft and chewy inside. Flavors include strawberry/grape, strawberry-lemon/blue raspberry and orange/cherry-watermelon.

TRICKS AND TREATS

Skittles Shriekers bring a



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super sour punch to jack-o-lanterns. These Fun Size Skittles contain the flavors you know and love with a secret super sour Shrieker. Flavors include Shocking Lime, Spine-Tingling Tangerine, Citrus Scream, Rattled Raspberry and Ghoulish Green Apple.

Hershey's Vampire Kisses have a blood-red center that's really gooey strawberry creme.

The bat-festooned foil is a great touch, too. Perfect for candy bowls everywhere on Halloween night.

FAVORITES WITH A TWIST

KitKat always breaks off the fun for Halloween. The Witch's Brew flavor is a KitKat wafer wrapped in green, marshmallow-flavored cream.

Hershey's cookies 'n' creme goes fangtastic with fun-size fang bars. You can find them in bags on their own or as part of a Halloween shapes assortment with Reese's pumpkins, Reese's ghosts, and York peppermint patty pumpkins.

Alternatively, Reese's dresses up its peanut butter cups a green bottom, calling them Frank-Cups. Add those to your

Halloween mix this year for a different take on the perfection that is the peanut butter cup.

M&M's gets in on cookies 'n' creme, pardon, cookies 'n' scream. Halloween-colored candies get a chocolate sandwich cookie center. Also look for Twix Cookies & Creme in a fun-size offering to fill up this year's pumpkins.

Cats, Bats and Rats, Oh My!

You can hardly have Halloween without black cats, hordes of black bats and a legion of scary rats. Why are these creatures so associated with spooky season? Let's find out.

BLACK CATS

Black cats are often considered the bringers of bad luck and were associated with witches in the medieval world. Because of that association, black cats are often used as a Halloween symbol to add another level of scary to decor. However, in some countries, such as Japan, they're considered good luck. In ancient Egypt, black cats were even worshiped as sacred.

BATS

Bats, as creatures who largely hunt at night (as those who eat mosquitoes often will), are associated with death and darkness. Plus, they often live in caves, which known for being, well, spooky. Then there's the vampires. In Bram Stoker's "Dracula," perhaps the best-known vampire, the count could turn into a bat at will.

But as you hang up your bat decor this Halloween, make sure to point out that bats really do help humans out. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, they save us several billion dollars a year in pest control just by being themselves and noshing on bugs. They also help pollinate more than 700 plants,

including bananas, peaches and mangoes.

RATS

Like bats, rats are largely nocturnal, giving them an aura of fear. Rats are also known to occupy abandoned places, ruins and other places where that other spooky season favorite lives — the ghost. Also, there's the association with pestilence and plague that makes them scary.

SPIDERS

First of all, they have eight spindly legs. Then they live in dark corners on webs that are hard to see, making it look like they're floating in mid air. They also, like rats, frequent abandoned places where ghosts like to hang out. Lastly, there's the poison part. Before modern medicine (and, in the case of the Brazilian wandering spider, even after it) spider bites could be deadly.

Again, though, while you're draping things in fake webs, point out that most spiders are harmless unless you're a bug. Spiders commonly feed on pests such as flies, moths, earwigs, roaches and mosquitoes. Real spider web silk is also stronger and tougher than steel, making it a miracle material.



Pumpkin Treats

Pumpkins are a quintessential Halloween ingredient, but these recipes are so good, you may be tempted to have them year round.

PUMPKIN CHILI

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 medium yellow bell pepper, chopped
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed and drained
 1 15-ounce can solid-pack pumpkin
 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
 3 cups chicken broth
 2 1/2 cups cubed cooked turkey
 2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
 2 teaspoons chili powder
 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil. Add the onion and pepper and cook until tender. Add the garlic and cook one minute longer.
 2. Transfer to a five-quart slow cooker and stir in the next 10 ingredients. Cook on low for 4-5 hours. Serve hot.

PUMPKIN PANCAKES

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups flour
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 tablespoon baking powder



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2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon salt
 3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
 3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
 2 cups milk
 3 large eggs
 1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree

Directions

1. Whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, cloves, ginger and allspice together in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk the milk, eggs and pumpkin puree. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and stir until the ingredients are

just mixed. Let rest for five minutes.

2. Heat a griddle or nonstick skillet over medium heat. Ladle a 1/2 cup of batter onto the skillet and cook until the pancakes are golden on the bottom and bubbly on top, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until the second side is golden brown and the pancake is cooked through.

3. Serve with maple syrup and whipped cream.

PUMPKIN HARD CIDER CHEESE DIP

Ingredients

4 slices thick-cut bacon, chopped

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons flour

1 clove garlic, minced

1 12-ounce bottle hard cider

1/2 cup pumpkin puree

1 teaspoon dijon mustard

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 Salt, to taste

1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

Pinch of cayenne pepper

4 ounces cream cheese, cut into

pieces

3 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

1. Cook the bacon in a medium skillet over medium heat until

brown and crisp. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain.

2. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and garlic, stir until incorporated, about two minutes. Whisk in the cider, pumpkin, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, half a teaspoon of salt, pie spice and cayenne. Stir until smooth. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, about 3 minutes or until thickened.

3. Gradually whisk in the cream cheese and cheddar until melted and smooth. Transfer to a bowl and top with bacon.