

The Origins of Halloween

Do you know what date Halloween is? That's right, it's October 25th. Halloween is often seen in American popular culture like movies and video games, and its popularity has spread across the world in recent decades. Parties, costumes, pumpkin carvings, sweets and candy are all things we associate with Halloween, but where do these traditions come from and how did Halloween start?



Samhain

Halloween comes from the ancient Celtic festival celebrated in the British Isles called "Samhain". It was the Celtic New Year that they celebrated on November 1st. This date was seen as the end of summer and harvest time and the beginning of winter and death. Celts believed that on this day, ghosts could return to our world.

Pumpkins

We didn't have pumpkins in Europe until after Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, so the Celts didn't make pumpkin carvings. Instead, they carved faces into other vegetables such as potatoes and turnips. These carvings were thought to scare the ghosts away when they returned for Halloween, so they would put them outside to protect their houses.



Costumes

Celts were scared of ghosts, so if they went outside at night on Halloween, they covered their faces with masks, often made from animal skins. They believed that if they wore these masks, the ghosts would think that they too were ghosts and not attack them.

Trick or Treat

Originally, Celtic people left food outside their houses for the ghosts to eat on Halloween. Much later in England, rich people would give spicy cakes to poor people who visited them at this time of year. This later became trick or treating as we know it today.



What do you do for Halloween in Japan? Do you have any plans this year?

Word bank

popular culture - 大衆文化

associate- 連想する

decade- 十年間

death- 死

turnip- かぶ

scare- 怖がらせる

Celt - ケルト人「イギリス、アイランド民族」

Celtic- ケルトの～

carving- 彫刻

carve- 彫る

harvest- 収穫