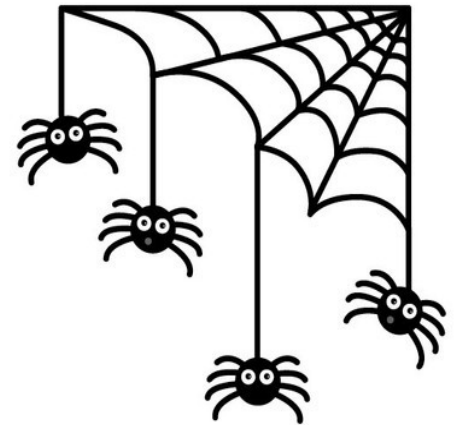




Halloween is celebrated on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. It comes from “All Hallows' Evening“, because it takes place on the evening before “All Saints'/Hallows' Day” on the 1<sup>st</sup> November which is a catholic festive day. On “All Saints' Day” people commemorate the dead, especially the saints.



*An old Irish Halloween Mask*



## Origins

Halloween originates from an old Celtic festival, *Samhain*. It was the celebration of the Celtic New Year, where the summer ended and winter began.

The Celts believed that in that night the boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead blurred out and the dead would come in form of ghosts into the living world.

They celebrated with huge bonfires and put some food in front of the house for the ghosts.

Later on emerged the practice of wearing a costume, going from house to house and getting a bit of food for reciting a poem or a song.

After the Christian Church emerged, it also had an impact on this tradition and spread the custom all over Europe.

With the settlers it came to America where it gained more and more popularity, until Halloween – as we know it today – came back to Europe around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## Customs

Common decorations for Halloween include spider webs, cats, witches and ghosts.

There are also hollow pumpkins (so called “jack-o’-lanterns”) with candles inside and a face carved into them.

People dress up in scary costumes and small kids go “trick-or-treating”. This means, they go from door to door, asking for candy (“treats”) with the phrase “trick or treat!”.

Especially in the USA, people also visit attractions like haunted houses or go to costume parties where they tell ghost stories, watch horror movies or play “apple bobbing”.

This is a game where apples floats in a water basin and you have to pick up one only by using your teeth.



*Jack-o'-lanterns*



*Apple bobbing*



*Sugar skulls*



*Skeletons*

## The Day of the Dead

The Day of the Dead (in Spanish “Día de los Muertos”) is celebrated in Mexico on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November and is something like “their” Halloween.

It is a celebration of the indigenous people from this region for the dead, but in contrast to Christian “All Saints' Day” it is a happy occasion. They believe the dead wouldn't want to see them sad.

They build small, colourful altars, have parties with food and drinks and just generally do what the dead ones liked to do when they were still alive.

Everywhere you will see skulls and skeletons, but they're not like the ones we have on Halloween. These are very colourfully decorated and are not supposed to look scary. They even have sugar skulls (“calaveras”) as a candy for this time of the year!