



Halloween

10 things you should know about

October 31st is Halloween, the night when witches, the dead, and evil spirits return to Earth. Before Christianity arrived in Britain, October 31st was the last day of the Celtic year and their Feast of the Dead. The Celts built fires on the hills to welcome the souls of the dead back to their homes.

If you go out on Halloween, make sure you don't travel in the dark. If you do then carry a piece of bread with some salt on it. This will protect you if you meet a supernatural being.

In the 9th century, the Church made November 1st the Feast of All Saints and October 31st became the eve of All Saints, or All Hallows - Halloween.

In ancient times people ate nuts to make them wise, and apples to protect them from evil. People still roast chestnuts and bake apples at Halloween.

The symbol of Halloween is the pumpkin. The inside of the pumpkin is extracted and the eyes, nose and mouth of a demonic face cut out. A candle is placed inside. These pumpkin heads were originally created to frighten evil spirits.

Halloween Party is the title of one of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot stories. The night also features in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *E.T.*, and the *Halloween* series of films.



Halloween was once thought to be the best time for predicting the future. If a girl wanted to know who her future husband would be, she would brush her hair in front of a mirror and hope to see his reflection. If she wanted to know his name then she would peel an apple in one long strip and throw it over her left shoulder. The peel would fall in the form of a letter, the initial of her future husband's name.

In the United States, children dress up in Halloween costumes and play a game that was introduced by immigrants. They go from house to house knocking on people's doors and shouting "Trick or Treat?". People usually give them a treat like some sweets. But if the children don't get a treat then they play a trick on the person.

If someone wanted to know if they would have a lucky year, they put apples and a sixpence in a tub of water. If the person could extract either of them with their mouth (without using their teeth), they would have a lucky year.

Make sure that you shut all windows and doors on Halloween. If a poltergeist gets in, it may never leave. Avoid crossroads at Halloween. It is here that witches meet and spirits do business with the Devil.

