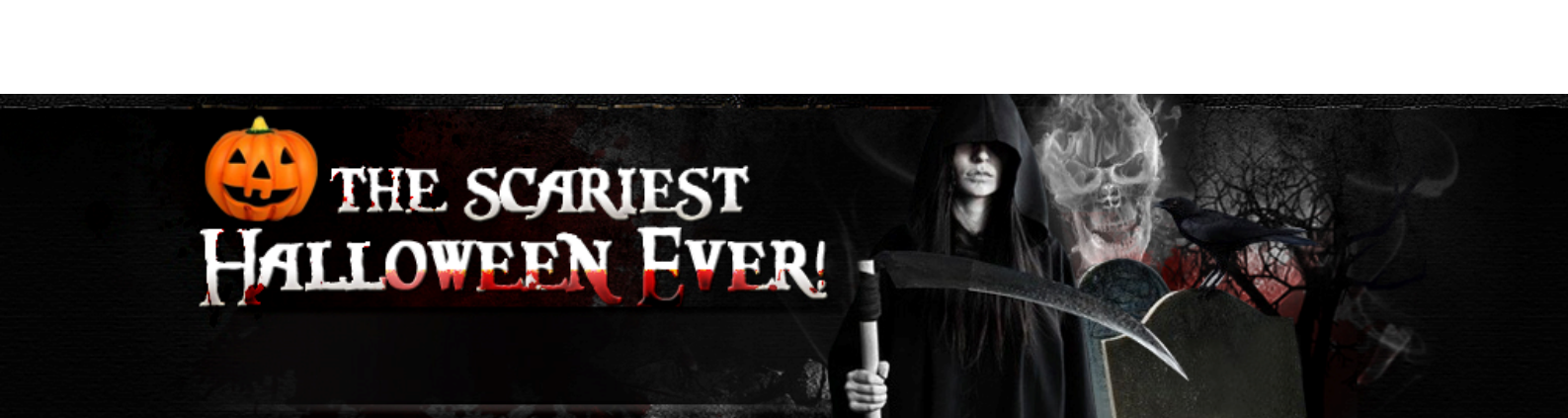
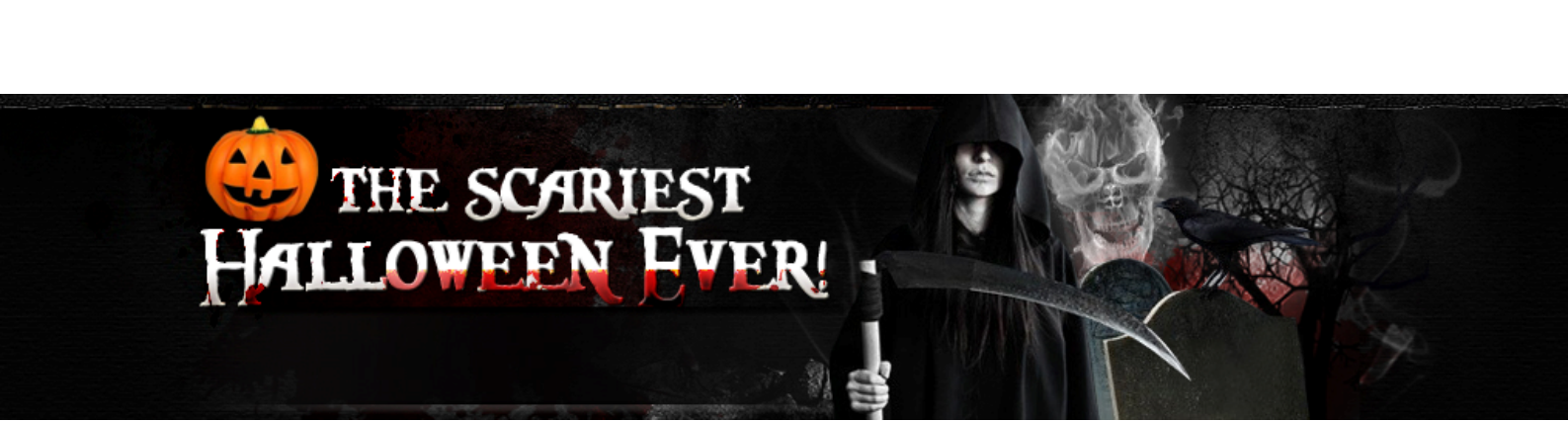




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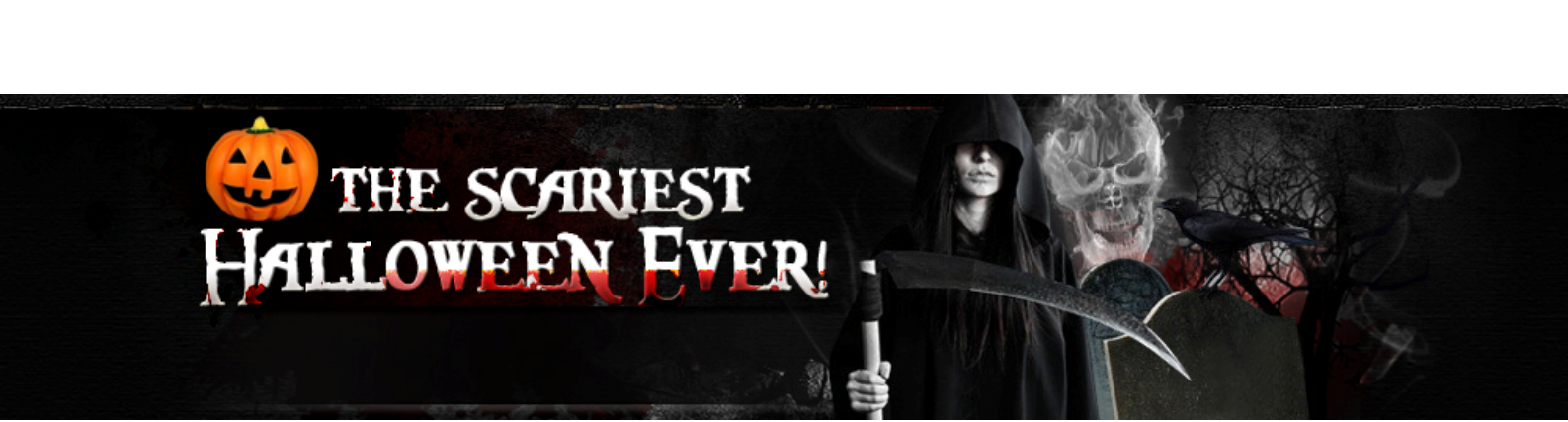
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Introduction

Halloween is one of the most celebrated holidays not just in the United States but in other parts of the world. Each year, kids—and kids at heart, await the arrival of the 31st of October. Who wouldn't love Halloween? Parties, trick-or-treats, plus it's the only time of the year when anyone can dress up however they please.

For many people, some of the fondest childhood memories they have experienced have happened on Halloween. That's why most parents try hard to make each Halloween special. But of course, Halloween isn't just for kids alone. Remember, everyone can have fun on a Halloween night. So how do you enjoy the ultimate Halloween experience?

First you've got to learn its story of course. You wouldn't be able to fully celebrate a holiday if you have no idea why it came to be, right? So before the fun, let's start with a bit of a lesson. Don't get scared yet, this lesson doesn't involve any mathematical equations or scientific theories—these are just basic facts about the history of Halloween.



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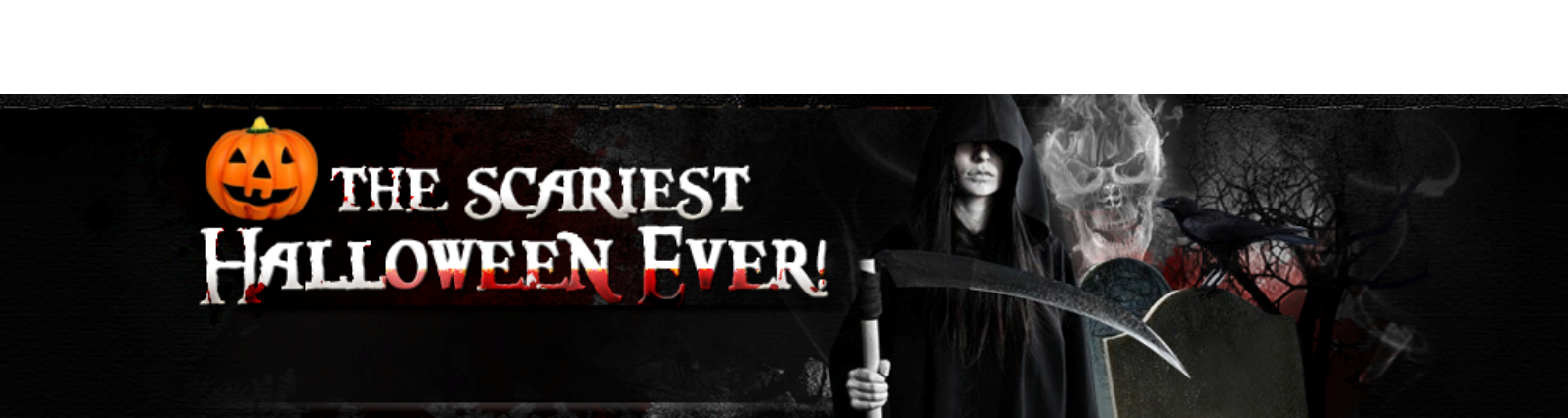
The History of Halloween

The celebration of Halloween is said to have sprung from an ancient Celtic festival called Samhain. The Celts held their New Year celebration every November 1st. This day marked the end of summer and the arrival of winter. The cold and dark winter was then associated to death. The Celts believed that on New Year's Eve (October 31), the wall which separates the worlds of the dead and the living becomes distorted—allowing passage of otherworldly beings.

On the night of October 31st, the Celts celebrated Samhain because they believed that the ghosts of the dead return to earth on this night. In addition, they also believe that the powers of Celtic priests to predict the future are heightened on this night, because of the presence of spirits. And for the Celts, these predictions were given great importance.

In the evening, the people gathered around a bonfire built by Celtic priests. These bonfires were considered sacred and are used to burn crop and animal sacrifices to please the deities. During the festival, the people donned costumes made from animal heads and skins. As they gathered around the bonfire, they tried to tell each others' fortunes. After the celebration, the people re-lit the fire on their hearth from the sacred bonfire. They believed that this practice gave them protection during the cold and dark winter.

When the Romans conquered most of the Celtic lands (now known as Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France), around 43 AD, their traditions

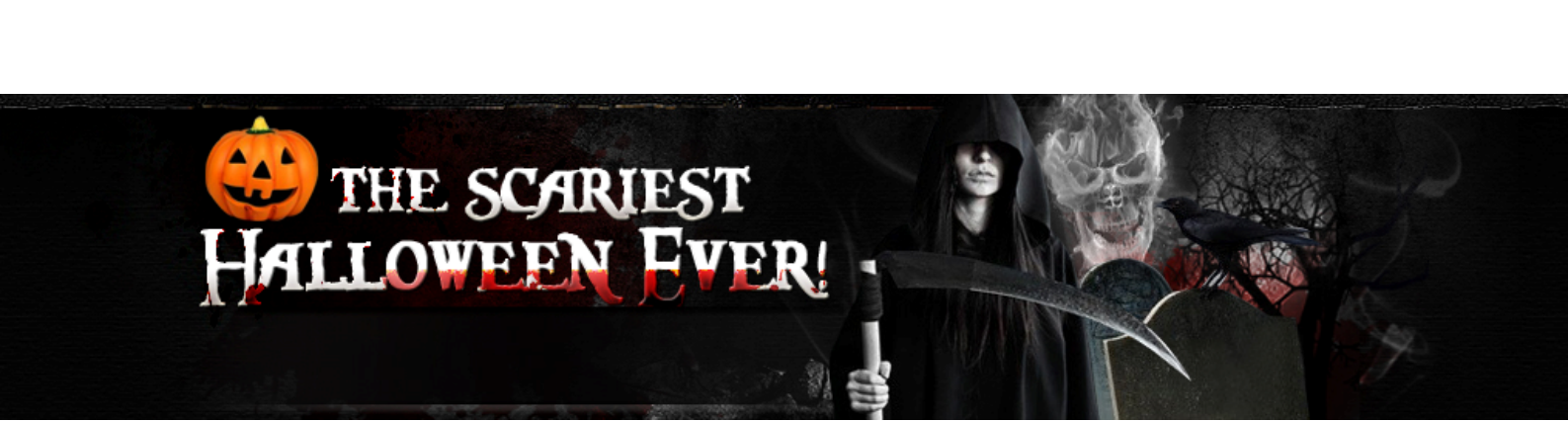


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merged—including their festivals. The celebration of Feralia, a festival celebrated by the Romans to memorialize the dead, and the feast day of Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruits and trees; were combined with Samhain. An apple was used as a symbol for Pomona; this may explain the custom of bobbing apples during Halloween.

Christianity took over Celtic lands around 800 BC, influencing Celtic festivals as well. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface IV declared November 1st to be All Saint's Day—a day to commemorate saints and martyrs. It is a popular belief that Pope Boniface IV purposely did so in an attempt to replace Samhain with a church-sanctioned holiday.

All Saint's Day was also referred to as All-hallows or All-hallowmas—this term was derived from the Middle English word *Alholowmesses* which means All Saint's Day. The night before All Saint's day, the night of the celebration of Samhain was called All-hallows Eve, finally becoming Halloween.



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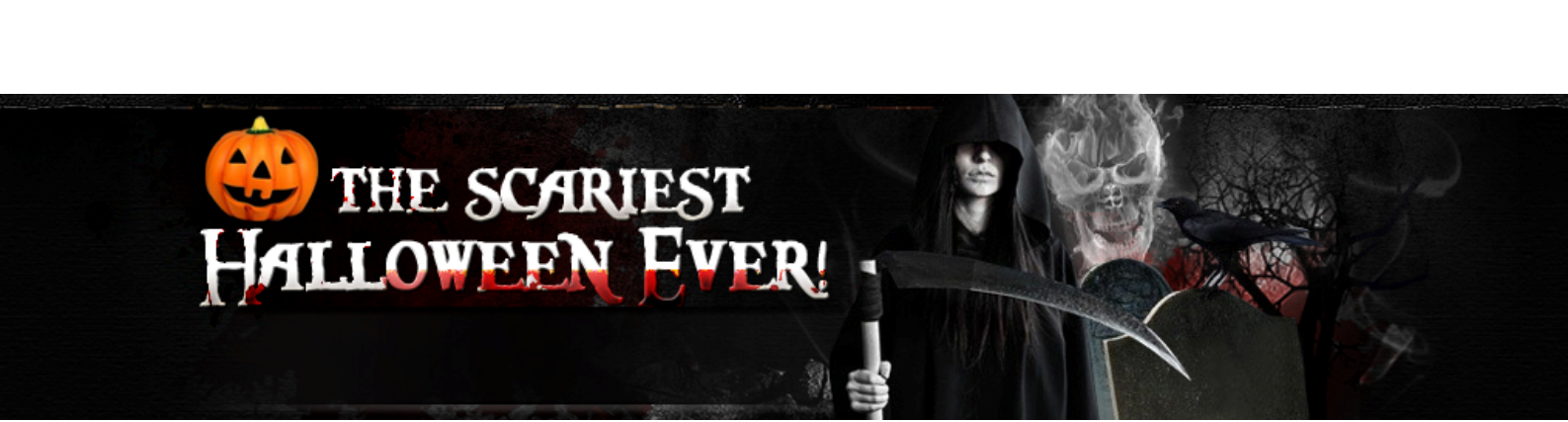
How Did Halloween Come To America?

European immigrants were the ones responsible for bringing the Halloween customs to America. But because of strict Protestant laws governing most of New England, celebration of Halloween was very limited in that area. Halloween however was commonly celebrated in places like Maryland and in many southern colonies.

During those times, the celebration of Halloween included play parties and public events to celebrate the harvest. During these events, people would gather around and share scary stories, predict each others' fortunes and of course dance and sing. Colonial Halloween celebrations also included story-telling and doing mischief of all kinds. Around the middle of the 19th century, celebrations during the autumn were done yearly; however, Halloween was not yet celebrated throughout the entire country.

In 1846, during the potato famine in Ireland, millions of Irish immigrants began to flock to America. This marked the beginning of Halloween celebrations everywhere in the country. And with the influence of both European and Irish traditions, an American version of Halloween was formed.

At the turn of the 19th century, Halloween slowly began to lose its spiritual implication and slowly started to become a children's holiday. Nowadays, Halloween is celebrated as a community. To date, Halloween is rated as the second most commercial holiday in the United States. Halloween may have lost



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most, if not all, its religious connotation. Superstitious beliefs may have been lost in time but people will always look forward to Halloween. Trick-or-treating, scary Halloween costumes and Halloween parties are already significant parts of the American traditions.

Now That You Know Its History, Let the Party Begin!

Let's start with the real fun. And what better way to get you into the Halloween spirit than a marathon of scary movies! In the next chapter, we go through a list of the scariest movies ever made!