

## THE ORIGINS OF HALLOWEEN



Halloween is an annual holiday celebrated each year on October 31. It originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear

costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints; soon, All Saints Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, donning costumes and eating sweet treats.

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1.

This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. Celts thought that the presence of the spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future.

To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins.

In 609, Pope Boniface IV and later Pope Gregory III dedicated the Pantheon in Rome in honor of all Christian martyrs, and the Catholic feast of All Martyrs Day was established on November 1. All Souls Day was celebrated on 31 October. It was similar to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils. The All Saints Day celebration was also called All-hallows or All-hallowmas and the night before it, the traditional night of Samhain in the Celtic religion, began to be called All-Hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween.



### True or False

Halloween is celebrated each year on October 31.	True	False
Celts lived in Ireland two hundred years ago	True	False
It is only celebrated in Ireland	True	False
Celts dressed up as saints, angels and devils on Halloween	True	False
All Saints Day is a Christian celebration	True	False

<https://www.history.com/topics/halloween/history-of-halloween>

