

October Webpage Post- Halloween: Origins and Cultural Customs

Halloween is one of the oldest holidays in the world and its origins can be traced back to an ancient Gaelic festival, **Samhain**, which was celebrated in Celtic countries on the 1st of November every year. Throughout the years, Samhain merged with the Christian holidays All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. This is why today's modern Halloween has such a big focus on the dead and spirits. Halloween has grown in popularity over the years and is now celebrated in many countries worldwide.

Some countries do not celebrate Halloween but have similar holidays and traditions that focus on celebrating departed loved ones and warding off evil spirits. Here are a few examples:

- In Latin America, Mexico and Spain, **Día de los Muertos** “Day of the Day” is celebrated at the beginning of November. It is said to reunite the living and the dead. Families honor their departed loved ones by visiting cemeteries and building altars with food and other offerings.
- In China, **Teng Chieh** is a lantern festival that is celebrated at the end of Chinese New Year. Lanterns in the shapes of different animals are hung up to ward off evil spirits. People will also place food and water in front of deceased loved ones' photos.
- Every summer, Japan has the **Obon** festival celebration. The event honors the spirits of ancestors and is celebrated by lighting fires each night and having red lanterns displayed and sometimes released into rivers and oceans.
- Cambodia celebrates **P'chum Ben**. During this celebration, Buddhists make offerings of sweet sticky rice wrapped in banana leaves at temples to celebrate their ancestors. Family and friends usually gather to listen to music and speeches from local monks.

All celebrations, traditions and holidays are special. If you are celebrating Halloween this year, we hope you have a blast dressing up in costumes, carving pumpkins, giving scares, and just having fun!