

Costumes, candy and pumpkins make Halloween shopping fun for everyone

By Los Angeles Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.29.15

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Guests wait along Main Street USA for Mickey Mouse's "Boo-To-You" Halloween Parade at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom in Bay Lake, Florida, Sept. 18, 2015. Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/Orlando Sentinel/TNS

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Joanna Robles was searching for something for her baby son to wear on Halloween. She was looking in a Spirit Halloween store. She saw a Batman costume to buy.

The baby's father really likes superheroes, she said.

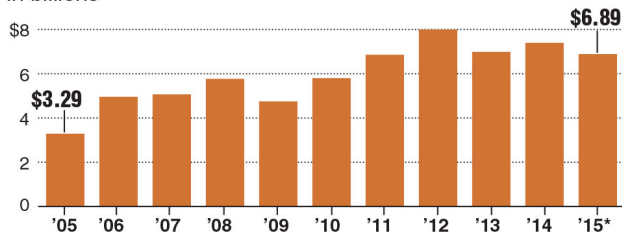
About 157 million Americans are expected to celebrate Halloween this year. They will walk around with their kids to get free candy. They will carve pumpkins or wear a costume for a party.

Halloween spending unmasked

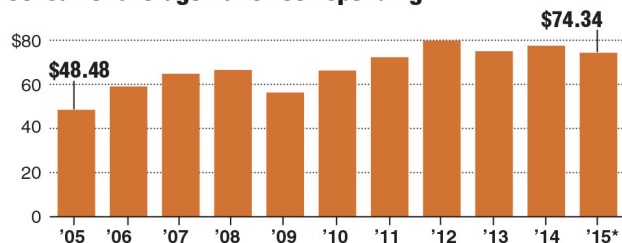
An estimated 157 million Americans will celebrate Halloween this year.

Overall Halloween spending

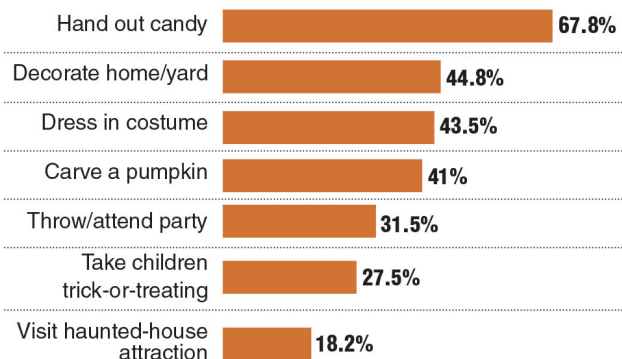
In billions



Consumer average Halloween spending

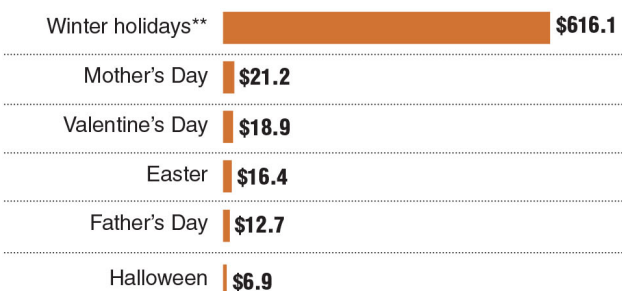


Top ways consumers will celebrate this year:



Halloween's rank among U.S. holiday spending

In billions



*Estimate
 **Includes Christmas and Thanksgiving
 Sources: National Retail Federation, Prosper Insights & Analytics
 Graphic: James Peltz, Angelica Quintero, Los Angeles Times/TNS

Halloween was once mostly for children. Now it has become a big shopping holiday.

Everybody Has Fun On Halloween

People who celebrate Halloween include 18- to 34-year-olds, a group known as millennials. Older adults also join in the fun.

“It’s not just for kids trick-or-treating anymore,” said Trisha Lombardo, who works in the Spirit Halloween store. There are 1,150 Spirit Halloween stores. They are only open during the Halloween season.

Shoppers will spend \$6.9 billion on Halloween this year. That is about \$74.34 spent by each person. The estimates come from a group called the National Retail Federation. The group represents people who run stores.

They think people will spend a little less money this year. Halloween shopping reached its highest at \$8 billion in 2012. Still, it is more than double what we spent on Halloween in 2005.

Lots Of Halloween Treat Choices

Stores and amusement parks, which have rides and games, are some of the places people spend money. The holiday also helps farmers who grow pumpkins. Many people buy pumpkins for Halloween.

Businesses say there are several reasons that the holiday is popular.

One is that young adults really like group activities, Lombardo said. This means more costume sales and more trips to amusement parks, she said.

People also love sharing online. They post photos and videos of their Halloween costumes, decorations and parties.

Social media are sites like Facebook and Instagram. They have meant a great deal to Halloween, said Jeff Green. He helps retailers improve their businesses.

Stores Like Trick-Or-Treat Shoppers

People still spend far less on Halloween than they spend on the winter holiday season. Shoppers spend about \$616 billion during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Lots more money is also spent on Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day and Father’s Day.

The reason is people mostly do not give Halloween gifts, said Kathy Grannis Allen. She works for the National Retail Federation.

Halloween sales are expected to be lower this year compared with 2014. One reason is that many people are re-using decorations and other things like costumes.

Candy and pumpkins cannot be reused. Most Americans will buy candy this year. They will probably spend about \$2.1 billion, slightly less than last year.

Take A Scary Ride!

Almost half of Americans also will carve a fresh pumpkin. In fact, most pumpkins grown in California are sold for Halloween.

Party City is a big retailer. It has many stores. Halloween is very important to the company. One-quarter of its sales each year come from Halloween.

Then there are the haunted amusement parks. One is Knott's "Scary Farm" near Los Angeles. It is run by Knott's Berry Farm from late September until October 31.

Knott's will not say how much of its sales come from Halloween. It has said about 15 of every 100 people who come to the amusement park each year come for the Scary Farm. The company said Halloween is an important time for making money.

Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-4]. How has Halloween changed?
- (A) Babies are dressed up in costumes for Halloween.
 - (B) Halloween is now a big holiday for shopping.
 - (C) People now usually carve their own pumpkins.
 - (D) People now take their kids trick-or-treating.
- 2 Read the section "Stores Like Trick-Or-Treat Shoppers." What can you conclude about people's spending habits?
- (A) People are willing to spend more money when they are buying presents for others.
 - (B) People like to spend money on things like gifts, but not on items like candy or pumpkins.
 - (C) People try not to spend money on Halloween in order to save it for Christmas and Thanksgiving.
 - (D) People re-use decorations for Halloween but not for Christmas, which is why they spend more at Christmas.
- 3 Look at the chart "Overall Halloween spending." What does the number \$6.89 billion mean?
- (A) It is the amount of money stores will spend on Halloween in 2015.
 - (B) It is the amount of money each person will spend on Halloween in 2015.
 - (C) It is the amount of money that everyone together will spend on Halloween in 2015.
 - (D) It is the amount of money that 6.89 billion people will spend on Halloween in 2015.
- 4 Look at the chart "Top ways consumers will celebrate this year." Which Halloween activity is MOST popular?
- (A) handing out candy
 - (B) trick-or-treating
 - (C) attending a party
 - (D) going to a haunted house