

IRISH HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS

Here are some of the most notable Irish Halloween traditions:

Colcannon for Dinner: Boiled potato, curly kale (a cabbage) and raw onions are provided as the traditional Irish Halloween dinner. Clean coins are wrapped in baking paper and placed in the potato for children to find and keep.

The Barnbrack Cake: The traditional Halloween cake in Ireland is the barnbrack which is a fruit bread. Each member of the family gets a slice. Great interest is taken in the outcome as there is a piece of rag, a coin and a ring in each cake. If you get the rag, then your financial future is doubtful. If you get the coin, then you can look forward to a prosperous year. Getting the ring is a sure sign of impending romance or continued happiness.

The Pumpkin: Carving pumpkins dates back to the eighteenth century and to an Irish blacksmith named Jack who colluded with the devil and then was denied entry into heaven. He was condemned to wander the earth and asked the devil for some light. He was given a burning coal ember which he placed inside a carved-out turnip. The tradition of Jack O'Lanterns was born - the bearer being the wandering blacksmith - a damned soul. Villagers in Ireland put these "lanterns" in their windows to keep the wanderer and other lost spirits away. When the Irish emigrated to America, there was not a great supply of turnips, so pumpkins were used instead.

Halloween Costumes: The tradition of wearing costumes dates back to Celtic times. On the special night when the living and the dead were at their closest, the Celtic Druids would dress up in elaborate costumes to disguise themselves as spirits and devils in case they encountered real spirits or devils during the night. By disguising themselves, they hoped that they would be able to avoid being carried away at the end of the night. This explains why witches, ghosts and devils remain the most popular choices for costumes.

The Bonfire: The Halloween bonfire is a tradition to encourage dreams of who your future husband or wife is going to be. The idea was to drop a cutting of your hair into the last of the burning embers and then dream of your future loved one.

Blind Date: Blindfolded local girls would go out into the fields and pull up the first cabbage they could find. If their cabbage had a substantial amount of earth attached to the roots, then their future loved one would have money. Eating the cabbage would reveal the nature of their future husband - bitter or sweet!

The Ivy Leaf: Each member of the family places a perfect ivy leaf into a cup of water and it is then left undisturbed overnight. If, in the morning, the leaf is still perfect and has not developed any spots, then the person who placed the leaf in the cup can be sure of 12 months of good health until the following Halloween. If it's not perfect.....

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



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October 4, 2005

See: www.Ireland-information.com/articles/irishhalloweentraditions.htm