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## Booking.com's 12 Spook-tacular Destinations to Celebrate Halloween and Day of the Dead

NEW YORK, September 19, 2017 /PRNewswire/ --

The nights are getting shorter, the leaves are changing color and pumpkin patches are ready for harvest-that means the wait for Halloween is almost over! While Halloween festivities originally began hundreds of years ago as part of a Celtic harvest festival known as All Hallows Eve, today it's a backbone of American culture. Cities from coast to coast celebrate the ghost and ghoulish season with festivals, costumes, haunted tours and spine-tingling rituals that provide entertainment to revelers of all ages. For those who want to make the spooky season last a bit longer, Día de los Muertos (literally Day of the Dead) is celebrated on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and has grown in popularity outside of Latin America in recent years thanks to its colorful parades, iconic sugar skulls, ubiquitous marigolds, fanciful costumes and fiendish face paint.

But how to choose from such an abundance of frightening activities? Don't panic! Whether you want to frolic in an extravagant costume or summon the haunted spirits of the night, **Booking.com** has harvested the 12 best locations to celebrate the spookiest time of the year.

### 1. New Orleans (Louisiana)

With its hoodoo and voodoo, New Orleans is one of the top destinations for Halloween. Visit one of the many haunted houses or book a cemetery tour to admire the gorgeous tombs of the city. St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, the oldest and most famous cemeteries in the city, is the final resting place of voodoo queen Marie Laveau. Lafayette Cemetery No. 1 is featured in Anne Rice's novels and is the location of the vampire Lestat's fictional grave. Lovers of vampires can't miss the Vampire Ball which is part of the Halloween festival Endless Night that takes place from October 28th to the 29th. The Voodoo Festival also takes place during the Halloween weekend, this festival is more about music and arts than the occult, but that doesn't mean it can't be magical!

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/new-orleans.html>

### 2. Orlando (Florida)

The theme parks are usually the first to kick off the Halloween season, with Disney's Magic Kingdom in the lead. Their Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party already started on August 25<sup>th</sup> and will last right up until Halloween. The name says it all, this is a family-friendly affair and entertainment includes a "Boo-to-You" Halloween parade, an undead barbershop quartet, a Scream-o-Ween dance party and "Happy HalloWishes" fireworks. SeaWorld and Universal are other Orlando-based amusement parks with Halloween celebrations.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/orlando.html>

### 3. Laconia (New Hampshire)

Pumpkins and Halloween are inseparable. In fact, it is hard to imagine that jack-o'-lanterns were once made of potatoes and turnips. There are many events that celebrate these smiling orange beauties, but the one you shouldn't miss, is the New Hampshire Pumpkin Festival in Laconia on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The festival started in Keene and holds the world record for the most lit jack-o'-lanterns displayed, at an impressive 30,581. In 2015, the festival moved to Laconia, which will also host it this year. Events include a pumpkin run/walk, a pumpkin parade, carving demonstrations, a pumpkin express, PumpCANALy and of course the pumpkin tower. You can even register your own pumpkin for the tower! Who knows, it might help break the record!

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/laconia.html>

### 4. Salem (Massachusetts)

Many associate Halloween with witches, and when it comes to witches, there is no better place to go than Salem, home of the notorious witch trials. During the entire month of October, you can enjoy the Haunted Happenings which include the Annual Psychic Fair and Witchcraft Expo, the show *Ghostbusted* at the Haunted Dinner Theater, performances at the House of the Seven Gables, the Official Salem Witches' Halloween Ball and a huge party on Halloween night. Of course there are also haunted houses, for example the Corwin House, as well as haunted walking tours, harbor tours and trolley tours.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/salem-massachusetts.html>

## 5. Sleepy Hollow (New York)

For a long time, Sleepy Hollow was actually known as North Tarrytown. However, since 1997, the original name of the village, which was immortalized in Washington Irving's short story *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, was reinstated. Festivities last into November and include taking a lantern-lit guided tour over Sleepy Hollow's cemetery and visiting the graves of Irving, William Rockefeller and Elizabeth Arden. You can also visit the 300-year-old Philipsburg Manor for a terrifying evening with the Headless Horseman, vampires, witches and ghosts. In Croton-on-Hudson you'll find another manor you shouldn't miss-the Van Cortlandt Manor, where you can admire an amazing display of 7,000 illuminated, hand-carved jack o' lanterns. This event is hugely popular, so make sure to reserve in advance!

<http://www.booking.com/region/us/westchester-county.html>

## 6. New York City (New York)

The biggest Halloween event in the Big Apple is the Village Halloween Parade that takes place on Halloween itself. For a truly authentic experience, you can dress up and march along with thousands of New Yorkers in the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of the parade, which runs straight up 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Spring Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Of course you can also just watch this huge event from the sidelines, which includes hundreds of giant puppets, dozens of bands, artists and dancers. The parade starts at 7 p.m. but try to get there early if you want to watch. There are also several Day of the Dead celebrations in New York City, such as the festival organized by Mano a Mano in St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, which takes place from October 27<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>. Every festival has an *ofrenda*, a traditional altar where you can leave photos of deceased loved ones, flowers and offerings.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/new-york.html>

## 7. Anoka (Minnesota)

Anoka, also known as the Halloween Capital of the World, is said to be the first city in the States to organize a Halloween parade. The organizers were sick and tired of the tricks the kids pulled during Halloween, so they decided to treat the youngsters to a large celebration to keep them busy. This was in 1920, and the festivities have only evolved since then. In Anoka, the Halloween season starts with the Pumpkin Bowl, a traditional football game, and is followed by the Orange Tie Ball, pumpkin carving contests, a costume contest for pets, the Spooktacular Carnival, a bonfire and several parades including the final Grand Day Parade on October 29th. <http://www.booking.com/city/us/anoka.html>

## 8. Chicago (Illinois)

Fans of *Children of the Corn* should check out the corn mazes near Chicago! Some open as early as September. With 33 acres, Richardson Adventure Farm claims to be the world's biggest corn maze and will leave guests wandering and wondering for hours. Looking for something a bit scarier? Heap's Haunted Corn Maze is filled with ghosts and ghouls and can only be visited at night... enter if you dare! Looking for some downtown fun? Then head to the haunted Congress Plaza Hotel that will host the Haunted Halloween Ball on October 28th. On Halloween you can enjoy or join the infamous Northalsted Halloween Parade, which is celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday this year.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/chicago.html>

## 9. Seattle (Washington)

Movie buffs can eat their hearts out at the futuristic EMP Museum during their *31 Days of Horror*. Visit the exhibition *Can't Look Away: The Lure of Horror Film* and marvel at artefacts from horror movies like the axe from *The Shining*, the interrogation chair from *Hostel* and the facehugger from *Alien*. You can also watch horror movies in style with scary drinks, join Howl-O-Ween or go to the Fashionably Undead Prom with its 'Under the Sea' theme. For those who prefer to see some real sea creatures, check out the Seattle Aquarium. In the weekend before Halloween, you can also enjoy events like Underwater Pumpkin Carving and Ominous Octopus Feeding.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/seattle.html>

## 10. Hollywood (California)

Universal Studios' "Halloween Horror Nights" in Hollywood is definitely not for all ages and certainly not for the faint of heart. Exclusively for the occasion, horror filmmaker Eli Roth created a new attraction, the Terror Tram, which will introduce guests to a murderous clown known as "Hollywood Harry". Additionally, there are scare zones and mazes based on horror productions, like *Saw*, *The Shining* and *American Horror Story*. Zombie lovers can visit *The Walking Dead* attraction. The Halloween Horror Nights goes until November 4th.

<http://www.booking.com/district/us/los-angeles/hollywood.html>

## 11. Birmingham (Alabama)

Of course you could visit one of the many parties during Halloween weekend in Birmingham, but save some energy for the Día de los Muertos Festival by Bare Hands Gallery. On November 2nd, the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of this event will take place at Cahaba Brewing Co. During the event, the dearly departed will be commemorated with *ofrendas*. You can bring photos, flowers, *pan de muerto*, sugar skulls or candles for the altars and shrines, and there will be a memorial roll call. The festival is a happy celebration of life with good food, music, art and laughter, and the dress code is fiesta fierce, with bones and sugar skulls. Not sure how to do the make-up for a sugar skull? No problem! You can visit one of the face painters at the festival.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/birmingham.html>

## 12. San Diego (California)

Being so close to the Mexican border, it's no wonder there are so many Day of the Dead celebrations in San Diego. They start as early as October with the Sherman Heights Día de los Muertos and last until November with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Día de los Muertos Festival at the Art Center. In between, there are festivals in La Vista Memorial Park, Old Town San Diego, Encinitas, South Bay and Oceanside. Many celebrations are traditional, with *ofrendas*, altar blessings, sugar skull decorating, music, folk dancing and traditional food. However, there are also art-making workshops, face painters, classic low rider cars, and several contests, like the altar contest and a *La Catrina* contest, where you can win by dressing up as this iconic elegant skeleton created by José Guadalupe Posada.

<http://www.booking.com/city/us/san-diego.html>

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