

HALLOWEEN: October 31 blue moon will be visible to whole world

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October's first full moon, also known as the harvest moon, appeared on the first day of the month.

The 2020 Halloween full moon will be visible to the entire world, rather than just parts of it, for the first time since World War II.

Although Halloween will look a little different this year because of the pandemic, the spooky decorations and delicious fall treats will still make an appearance.

Halloween is a time for trick-or-treating, scary costumes, jack-o'-lanterns and haunted houses. But how did it become this way?

Much of Halloween's most influential traditions are deeply rooted in history, dating back to ancient Ireland. Although our Halloween is less about dead spirits and more about having fun and dressing up, there are some traditional aspects of an Irish Halloween that we have kept going.

The Celts were pagans, people who worship many gods or who worship nature and the Earth. Celts lived in what is now Ireland, and they celebrated the new year on November 1. Their festival, Samhain (pronounced "sow-in"), marked the end of fall's harvest right before winter, a season that signified death and darkness for the Celts.

They believed that on the night before the shift, October 31 — which came to be called All Hallows' Eve — the worlds of the living and the dead intersected. The ghosts roaming Earth were thought to help predict the future, so the Celts welcomed them with sacrificial bonfires and by dressing in costumes of animal heads and skins.

In the mid-19th century Ireland's devastating potato famine caused mass immigration — more than 1.5 million Irish people fled to America during that time. With them, they brought their long-held Halloween traditions, and the soon-to-be holiday caught on quickly, spreading nationwide.

The Irish Celts were the ones who invented the jack-o'-lantern.

There are two schools of thought on why the Irish carried jack-o'-lanterns. One is that the tradition is an ancient Celtic tradition. In order to carry home an ember from the communal bonfire, the people would hollow out a turnip so they could walk home with the fire still burning.

The other version is a bit spookier. The story goes that jack-o'-lanterns are named after an Irish blacksmith,

called Jack, who was in close collaboration with the devil and was denied entry into Heaven. Jack was condemned to walk the earth for eternity but asked the devil for some light. He was given a burning coal to place in a turnip that he had hollowed out. Some Irish believe that hanging a lantern in their front window would keep Jack's wandering soul away.

Halloween would not be the same without a haunted house. The idea behind haunted houses is not new — people have entertained themselves with spooky stories for centuries.

Halloween-themed haunted houses in the

United States emerged during the Great Depression as American parents schemed up ways to distract young tricksters, whose holiday pranks had escalated to property damage, vandalism, and harassment of strangers.

Those first haunted houses were very simple. Groups of families would decorate their basements and hold "house-to-house" parties. Kids could spook themselves by traveling from basement to basement and experiencing different scary scenes.

The haunted house didn't become a cultural icon, though, until Walt Disney decided to build one. Disneyland's Haunted Mansion opened in 1969.

Halloween could be a night for hooligans — with more of an emphasis on trick than treat. By the 1950s, town leaders had successfully limited vandalism and Halloween had evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young. The baby boom of the 1950s also made the holiday more family oriented, and Halloween parties began to move to school classrooms and homes. Trick-or-treating was also revived around this time and has been steadily practiced since.

There is so much to love



A traditional Irish turnip jack-o'-lantern from the early 20th century.

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PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Some local residents went all-out on the spooky for Halloween.

about Halloween: pumpkin carving fun with the family; telling scary ghost stories; baking Halloween cupcakes; and the list goes on. But one traditional thing to do as October 31 draws near

is to watch a few of the best scary Halloween movies. This year, more than ever, you might be tempted to stay home and curl up with some creepy flicks, under a blue moon.

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