

Halloween around the world

by Megan McCoy

It's just a matter of days before costumes come to life, candy gets distributed and adults party the night away. Here in the United States the holiday is all about having a good time, whether that means getting dressed up as your favorite character and going out, or staying in with a bucket full of fun-sized candy and a scary movie playing. Countries around the world celebrate this holiday in a style all their own.

Irma Bjerre, the Clackamas Community College study abroad director, said in Colombia, there are a few similarities to how the holiday is celebrated. Children still get dressed up as their favorite characters and go trick-or-treating, but according to Bjerre, the children don't go to strangers' houses. They trick-or-treat strictly at the houses of friends and family members.

Mexico has a holiday close to the same time as Halloween called *Dia De Los Muertos* or "Day of the Dead." This holiday takes place from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 and is focused around honoring loved ones who have died.

"Families believe that the spirit of their dead loved ones will return from the underworld to visit with the family for a day, and the spirits console the living for their loss," said Enrique Farrera, an academic advising specialist from the community center.

He also said that decorations include items such as marigold flowers and pictures of loved ones who died. "paintings or sculptures of religious figures such as the Virgin Mary, Jesus, saints and the crucifix are common," said Farrera. Traditional foods eaten over the course of the celebration include pastries, pumpkin, tamales, enchiladas, mole, chocolate and sugar skulls.

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Peruvian Halloween is much more restrictive than in the US. Maria Dixon, an enrollment services specialist from the Roger Rook building who used to live in Peru, said that due to the heavy religious influence, it is completely unheard of to dress up as something scary. If a child wishes to dress up, it has to be something light hearted, such as "a princess or a pirate," and even then it's still looked down upon. Dixon and her sisters never dressed up for the holiday. "We would be sleeping outside!" she joked. Trick-or-treating is also not something children do there.

Halloween is not a traditional holiday in Germany, according to Anton Loebbert, an exchange student attending CCC. The holiday is starting to branch out from America. Loebbert says that not a lot of people celebrate it, but "if we do it's probably just a party where you get dressed as something scary." He also mentioned that some children have picked up the trick-or-treating tradition but there is another holiday later in November that is very similar called Saint Martin's Day. Loebbert explained Saint Martin's Day is an event where people go around a neighborhood and sing carols to each neighbor in return for candy.

In just a few short days people from around the world will be celebrating Halloween in their own unique fashion. Whether it's in America, Mexico, Peru, Germany or any other country, it is bound to be a good time.