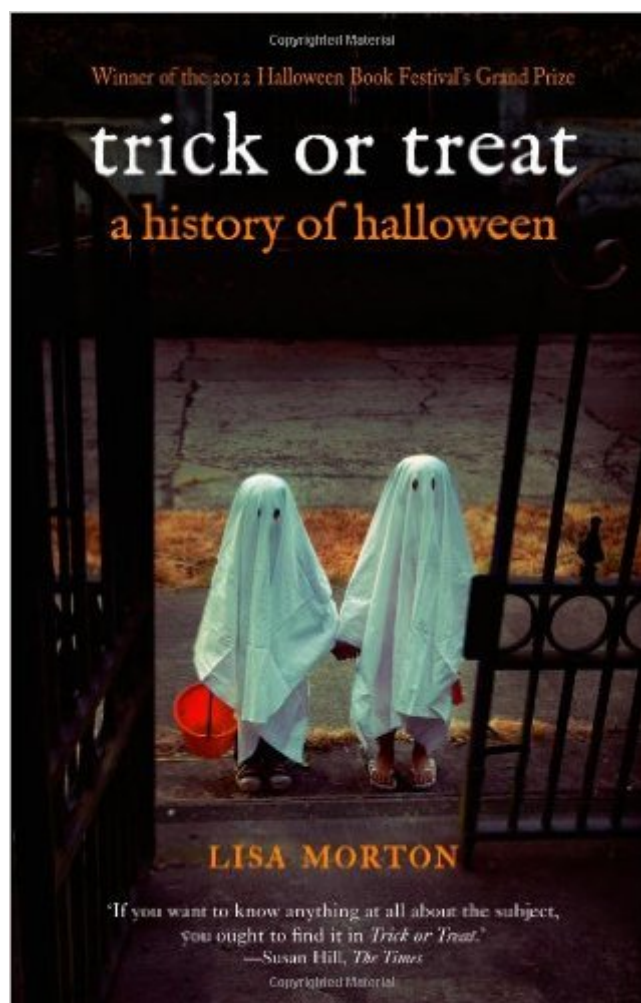


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Trick Or Treat: A History Of Halloween



Synopsis

Every year, children and adults alike take to the streets dressed as witches, demons, animals, celebrities, and more. They carve pumpkins and play pranks, and the braver ones watch scary movies and go on ghost tours. There are parades, fireworks displays, cornfield mazes, and haunted houses—and, most important, copious amounts of bite-sized candy. The popularity of Halloween has spread around the globe to places as diverse as Russia, China, and Japan, but its association with death and the supernatural and its inevitable commercialization has made it one of our most misunderstood holidays. How did it become what it is today? In *Trick or Treat*, Halloween aficionado Lisa Morton provides a thorough history of this spooky day. She begins by looking at how holidays like the Celtic Samhain, a Gaelic harvest festival, have blended with the British Guy Fawkes Day and the Catholic All Souls' Day to produce the modern Halloween, and she explains how the holiday was reborn in America, where costumes and trick-or-treat rituals have become new customs. Morton takes into account the influence of related but independent holidays, especially the Mexican Day of the Dead, as well as the explosion in popularity of haunted attractions and the impact of such events as 9/11 and the economic recession on the celebration today. *Trick or Treat* also examines the effect Halloween has had on popular culture through the literary works of Washington Irving and Ray Bradbury, films like *Halloween* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and television shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *The Simpsons*. Considering the holiday in the context of its worldwide popularity for the first time, this book will be a treat for any Halloween lover.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Halloween has been my favorite holiday for the past 3+ decades. As a child it meant making my own costumes and decorations, hosting the big Halloween party for all my friends, and hearing stories from my dad about scrounging through trunks of old clothes in the attic and tumbling through his little Midwestern hometown with all his brothers. "Adult" Halloween and I never meshed. My version of the holiday now involves upping the ante when it comes to decorating the house, handing out treats, and roaming the neighborhood in a more elaborate homemade costume. My "adult" version of Halloween has also come to involve reading everything I can find about the holiday. I want to know about its origins, earlier practices, how and why it has changed since I was a kid, etc. It's not reading, but I also go to historical recreation Halloween dinners and celebrations (yes, these exist). I'm a cultural historian (doctorate in art history and archaeology, but it's really cultural and visual history), so that's the kind of viewpoint I can offer here: From where I stand, this is absolutely the best book on Halloween and its history as a cultural phenomenon. I've read *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* by Nicolas Rogers and though that book is supposedly more scholarly, I honestly don't think it was as interesting or informative. Whatever your level of interest, I'd recommend Lisa Morton's book over that one. In fact, if you just want to learn enough about Halloween's past to recreate a 19th century party, I think this book would be a great resource for you.

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