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**Halloween Happenings**

**By Arleen M. Kaptur**

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Jack-O-Lanterns, black cats, ghosts, goblins, and a full moon – all add up to a lot of fun and enjoyment for family, friends, and neighbors. Safety-of course should be "preached" well before Halloween as well as safety precautions to insure that little ones and "scary monsters" enjoy themselves but are safe and sound.

Reflective tape on shoes, jackets, the back and front of costumes, and on treat bags is one way of keeping safe when the day turns into night. Also, "going together" is more fun than going alone. Little children should be shown that make-believe is part of this Holiday, and they should not be given a "scare."

Having a home/school/or town party? Decorations are fun and let the kids help. It's always nice to pack away something this year that a child makes, and watch their eyes light up when you unpack it a year later and use it again – they made it – and their pride will show. Even teen-agers (but they may not show it) enjoy a little "remembering" when old items are pulled out.

Pick a theme for your Holiday Get-together. It could be a Monster Bash, a Ghostly Encounter, or a Pumpkin Extravaganza. If you are inviting a wide range of ages – consider "no-win" games for the younger set and hand out those prizes freely. Older children enjoy a little friendly competition and adults should have a combination of both.

Pumpkins, yarn-tied ghosts just hanging around, or a bit of dry ice in a home-made cauldron (safely away from little fingers and curious adults) will go a long-way with effect.

Prizes and treats could be stickers, pencils, erasers, notebooks, coloring or puzzle books, glow-in-the-dark anything (necklaces, bracelets, etc.) and other items that are a great substitute for way too much candy and sweets. But sweets are a part of the Halloween Bash so here's a few suggestions:

Start your morning out with pumpkin pancakes:

A Jack-O-Lantern pan helps but you could improvise.

2 cups biscuit mix, 2 tbs. light brown sugar, packed, 2 tsp. ground cinnamon, 1-1/2 cups (12 ozs.) undiluted evaporated milk, 1/2 cup solid pack pumpkin, 2 tbs. vegetable oil, and 2 eggs

Place your pan in oven and preheat it (450). In bowl, combine biscuit mix, sugar, cinnamon, evaporated milk, pumpkin, oil and eggs. Whisk until smooth. Spray your heated pan with non-stick spray. Pour 2 cups of batter in the pan. Return to oven and bake 8 mins. or until top is dry and edges

## Halloween Happenings

are brown. Cut butter pats in triangles for eyes, nose, and happy teeth. Or use your favorite pancake mix, prepare in a frying pan or griddle and decorate. Place a small stem on the top. Serve with sausage links, orange juice, and a lot of giggles.

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Whatever food items you prepare for the day should be given appropriate names, of course. Your family can feast on Boo Salad, Ghoul Hands (a clear plastic glove with a candy corn placed in the fingertips for a nail, and filled with popcorn, tied on the top with orange or black yarn), Scary cupcakes, Witches' Brew, Bewitching ice cream sundaes, and Marshmallow or Mashed Potato Ghosts. Serving cheeseburgers: cut out triangles for eyes, nose and make a silly grin in the cheese just before serving. A Jack-O-Lantern burger instantly. Gummy worms can crawl out from under plates and hang leisurely on cups.

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### Jiggly Pumpkins:

Use a pumpkin cookie cutter:

2 pkgs. (6 ozs. each) orange-flavored gelatin, 2-1/2 cups boiling water, 1 cup cold milk, 1 pkg. (3.4 ozs.) instant vanilla pudding mix, candy corn, and black licorice.

Dissolve the gelatin in water, set aside for 30 mins. Whisk milk and pudding mix until smooth, about a minute or two. Pour into an oiled pan and chill until set.

Using your pumpkin cookie cutter, cut into shapes and decorate.

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### Menu Ideas:

Hot turkey sandwich

Ghostly white potatoes and gravy

Pineapple witches' brew

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### Halloween Macaroni and Cheese

Monster teeth (green peas)

Graveyard surprise (chocolate pudding with whipped cream ghosts swirled on top)

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### Candied apples:

12 apples

3 cups sugar

1/4 tsp. cream of tartar

2/3 cup water

1 tsp. lemon juice

15 cloves

1-2 tsp. red food coloring

Place sticks in apples. Combine sugar, cream of tartar, water, lemon juice and cloves in pan. Stir over heat until sugar is completely dissolved. Add the food coloring. Boil, without stirring to hard-crack stage.

Remove from heat; remove cloves. Twist apples in syrup and place on buttered cookie sheet to dry.

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### Mashed Potato Ghosts:

2 lbs. potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

## Halloween Happenings

3/4 cup milk, heated  
2 tbs. butter  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. black pepper  
1/2 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese  
2 tbs. freshly chopped parsley or dill

Place potatoes in pot and add enough water to cover. Cook 15 mins. or until very tender. Drain and mash, adding in the hot milk, butter, salt, and pepper. Stir in the cheddar and parsley.

To make a ghost:

Create your ghost shapes on waxed paper or foil. Cut out your shape to use as a guide.

Use 1/2 to 1 cup mashed potatoes for each ghost. Place the stencil on top of the mashed potatoes, cut around shape, and remove excess. Use olives for eyes and mouth or raisins, if you prefer.

To reheat: place ghosts on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 for 6–7 mins. loosely covered with foil.

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Witches' Brew:

1/4 cup cocoa powder  
1/2 cup hot water

1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
1/3tsp. salt  
3–1/2 cups milk  
dash of vanilla  
dash of cloves  
cinnamon sticks

Combine cocoa, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in pan; add the 1/2 cup hot water slowly. Heat to boiling, stirring and cook 2 mins. Add milk; but do not boil. Remove from heat, add vanilla and cloves. Beat with mixer until frothy and serve in mugs with cinnamon stick.

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Have some old sheets – taking a black marker, draw eyes and a mouth. Hang on a broomstick and place on patios and porches.

Change the light bulbs in your lamps to green or orange for Halloween night.

If you have "door" duty on Halloween night, join in the fun – dress up, play some Halloween tapes in the background, and open the door slowly and at first, just let your hand reach around – of course, check to see if little ones are knocking, then greet them with a smile and a treat.

Use colored plates, cups, and cupcake paper cups for treats or for a meal. Getting into the "spirit" of the day, is just as much fun as visiting that Pumpkin Patch and waiting for the Great Pumpkin to arrive.

Have fun and

ENJOY!

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(Excerpt from Arleen's book – Halloween Happenings)

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## **Fun & Healthy Halloween Treats**

**By Sherri Allen**

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It's almost time for Halloween. Little ghosts and goblins will be running through neighborhoods across the country, going door-to-door, calling out the same three words, "trick or treat!" Of course, they'll be hoping for and expecting treats. This year, instead of handing out the usual candy treats, consider trying an alternative. Here are some Halloween treats the children will enjoy that won't leave them bouncing off the walls:

- \* Small bags of pretzels or chips
- \* Mini-bags of microwave popcorn
- \* Fruit-Roll Ups
- \* Fruit juice snacks
- \* Small packages of nuts or sunflower seeds
- \* Individually wrapped beef jerky or Slim Jims
- \* Snack-size graham crackers, animal crackers or Goldfish crackers

You could even consider non-food items. Here are a few:

- \* Stickers — kids love stickers
- \* Halloween (or other cool, colorful) pencils
- \* Plastic whistles
- \* Spider rings
- \* Brightly-colored toothbrushes or flavored dental floss

Be creative and help the children in your neighborhood have a healthier Halloween!

Sherri Allen is the editor of [SherriAllen.com](http://SherriAllen.com), an online publication devoted to topics such as family, food, garden, house & home, and money. For great articles, information, tips, recipes, reviews and coloring pages, visit

[www.sherriallen.com](http://www.sherriallen.com)



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