

Halloween

HOW-TO

Your guide to the best tips and tricks for a wicked-good time this holiday season

BY DEBBIE LAVDAS

Halloween is one of the most bewitching, beloved times of the year, with enchanting nights of fright and colorfully spooky parties. We rounded up some of the best bets for **Halloween in Orange County**, from the **hottest costumes** and haunted houses in the area to creative crafts and insider O.C. info. Read on and get in the spirit as we lead you through a web of spooktacular fun.

Fun fact: Americans love Halloween. Last year alone, 86 million households handed out candy to trick-or-treaters. Nearly 35 percent of us threw parties, and 50 percent decorated our houses. So pull out that “Thriller” soundtrack or old “Monster Mash” recording, and forget your worries as you get lost in the over-the-top silliness of the season.

Killer crafts

Get in the spirit. Creative Kara-Noel Lawson from OC Family's 'She's Crafty' blog shares these 'dead-on' décor ideas:



Very superstitious

Get black-cat crafty in three simple steps:

1. Glue buttons and embroidery floss to a square black pillow.
2. Create a cat head/ear effect by pressing down the top center of the pillow.
3. Tug out the top pillow corners.



Blood orange

Create a festive orange ruffle wreath for you door:

1. Cut 4-inch strips down the length of 1 yard of fabric.
2. Sew the strips into ruffles.
3. Use a razor blade to cut a black foam core into your wreath shape.
4. Glue the ruffles around the wreath, starting at the center, with a hot glue gun.

Whassup, Jack?

Surprise your family with a new jack-o'-lantern every day before Halloween.

1. Cut jack-o'-lantern faces out of black construction paper.
2. Use tape to stick the faces on anything throughout your haunted home.



Beware of bats

Fear not – bunting is easy and adds to any mantle or window frame.

1. Use a bat silhouette to cut out bats from colored felt.
2. Using a sewing machine, connect the bats with a chain stitch by overlapping each bat at wing's edge.



Roses are black

Start out pretty and then let your whites roses turn a creepy black.

1. Place a vase on a drop cloth and spray with black paint.
2. Let it dry, and add fabric strip and flowers to finish.



Time for a hanging!

Embroidery hoop wall hangings make great wall art.

1. Cut base fabric to the size of your embroidery hoop.
2. Cut animal silhouettes from contrasting fabric and use "steam-a-seam" to adhere silhouette to base fabric.
3. Frame with the embroidery hoop and hang.

Haunted haunts to hit

Get in the spirit by stepping out in O.C.



The Haunt at Heritage Hill

It's the fifth annual Haunt at Heritage Hill on Friday, **Oct 19**. Dare to take part in the Friday Night Fright, as the park is transformed into a terrifying adventure that is fun for teens and adults. This year's Halloween park décor and festivities include a spooky schoolhouse with a fright maze, a Sleepy Hollow scare zone, video game contests and a DJ with a glowing light show. The park will host a special screening of the classic Universal monster release "Frankenstein." Hours: 6-10:30 p.m. Cost: \$5. Ages: recommended for 12 years and up. ocparks.com/heritagehill



The Empty Grave in Anaheim

Love a good scream? "The Empty Grave" returns this fall for the eighth year with an unmatched vengeance and fury. Not recommended for children under 10, it is at Anaheim GardenWalk in Anaheim. The fun takes place on select dates between **Sept. 28** and **Oct. 31**. theemptygrave.com



Terrifying tunes

The Pacific Symphony will host its Halloween Spooktacular Concert for families on Saturday, **Oct. 20**, at 10 and 11:30 a.m. The mysterious music is perfect for little ghouls and ghosts. Mussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain" and selections from the Harry Potter movies will be performed. Conductor Maxim Eshkenazy and his charges make the morning so fun for the kids. Make sure they wear their favorite costume. pacificsymphony.org



Get carried away

Armstrong Garden Centers offers All-You-Can-Carry pumpkin fun. Kids of all ages (that includes Dad, who has the longest arms) can gather as many pumpkins as they can carry for \$20. The Halloween icons always add a festive look to any haunted hangout. Make it an annual tradition. armstronggarden.com



Soka University's Haunted House and Halloween Faire

Soka University will have booths, games and activities for kids, but beware: The haunted house is for young teens and up. It will open at 7 p.m. on **Oct. 27**, and 8 p.m. on **Oct 28**. Admission is \$5. soka.edu

A ghostly host of family fun



Make tracks to the Pumpkin Patch

Creep over to the Irvine Park Railroad's seventh annual Pumpkin Patch, open daily through Oct. 31. Choose from thousands of pumpkins in all shapes and sizes, and enjoy train rides, hayrides and a child-friendly haunted house. Check out the John Deere tractor racing and enjoy a delectable assortment of food, plus Halloween cookie decorating. [irvineparkrailroad](http://irvineparkrailroad.com)



The Haunt at Calico Ghost Town

Take the family on a day trip to Calico, the real-life ghost town in San Bernardino County. Calico is hosting its annual Ghost Haunt the weekends of **Oct. 19-21** and **26-28**. Although it's well worth a day outing, you can also reserve a campsite. Visitors from all over SoCal enjoy the ghosts, ghouls, games and goblins. Everything is family-friendly and only mildly scary, so younger kids will still have fun. Wearing costumes is encouraged. calicotown.com



Autumn Harvest Festival at Heritage Hill

OC Parks and the city of Lake Forest will present the annual Autumn Harvest Festival at Heritage Hill on Oct. 20. The park will be dressed up with "The Princess Bride" trick-or-treatations, The East India Trading Company Pirate Adventure Maze, the Harry Potter School House, American adventure storytelling and the return of the Indiana Jones Adventure Show. ocparks.com/heritagehill



PRIVATE AFTER-PARTY PERKS

Here are 9 nuggets to know about Mickey's Halloween Party:

1. A separate ticket for Mickey's Halloween Party offers trick-or-treating in Disneyland on 10 Special October Nights: Oct. 2, 5, 9, 12, 15, 19, 23, 26, 29 and 31.
2. Dress in your favorite costume.
3. You can arrive before the party to "mix in" with regular Disneyland guests.
4. Treat stations offer tasty candy.
5. A fireworks show is fired off for guests of Mickey's Halloween Party.
6. The spooktacular "Mickey's Costume Party" cavalcade performs twice nightly.
7. "Boo-gie" at fun dance parties.
8. Ride the Haunted Mansion Holiday and Space Mountain Ghost Galaxy.
9. Tickets for the spooky night start at \$54 for select nights when purchased in advance. Disneyland.com/Halloween

Don't miss Halloween Time at Disneyland, when the park puts on its black-and-orange best.

New this year:

Disney's Halloween Time Carnival, featuring "The Astounding Cauldron of Magic," will be held at the Big Thunder Ranch Jamboree. It conjures villains two times an hour, with the help of a show host and child volunteers who will cast a magic spell. Look for the smoldering cauldron, spooky smoke, thunder, lightning and an assortment of surprises. You'll never know which villain might appear – maybe Evil Queen, Jafar, Cruella de Vil, Captain Hook or Maleficent?



Do you know the Haunted Mansion history?

According to Disneyland lore, ghostly goings-on have spooked the iconic Haunted Mansion for years, until no one would go near it. So in the 1960s, 999 restless spirits were invited to live there. The final 1,000th spot was reserved for Jack Skellington and his early Christmas antics. While residents get a chance to leave the house at the stroke of midnight, all must materialize back into the Mansion for all eternity.

Cover Story

5 can't-miss costumes

Be a superhero, dare to scare or go cute in Hello Kitty.

What's hot on the Halloween best-dressed list?

"Look for superhero-style costumes due to the comic-book movies that have been hugely successful this past summer, such as 'The Avengers' and [Batman] 'The Dark Knight Rises,'" says Dave Huffman, owner of Costume Castle, in Lake Forest. "However, this doesn't mean that everyone will be a superhero. Each season we are asked what the most popular costume is, and the real answer is that here isn't one. Halloween costume sales are not driven by a few particular items. thecostumecastle.com



* Edward the Owl



* Toddler Hello-Kitty, Costume Castle



* Toddler Spider-Man, Costume Castle



* Baby Lion



* Child Avenger, Costume Castle

3 costume tips from Costume Castle:

1. Shop early. By doing so, you can take advantage of early-bird coupons, shorter lines and the best selection, and you'll have time to special order items.
2. Buy local. In the current economy, it's important to support your local businesses. Although purchasing online might save you a dollar or two, it hardly gives you the same experience. Customer service is the most important element of what brick-and-mortar costume shops are all about.
3. One-stop shop. By going to a year-round costume store such as Costume Castle, you can get your costumes, party supplies, balloons and more all at one place.

