

Candy, pumpkins dominate Halloween rituals

The observance of Halloween, which dates back to Celtic rituals thousands of years ago, has long been associated with images of witches, ghosts and vampires. Over the years, Halloween customs and rituals have changed dramatically. Today, Halloween is celebrated many different ways, including wearing costumes, children trick or treating, carving pumpkins, and going to haunted houses and parties.



The average age for trick-or-treaters is 5 to 14, with the potential number in the U.S. in 2010 being 41 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Illinois produced an estimated 427 million pounds of the vined orange gourd last year. California, New York and Ohio were also major pumpkin-producing states, each with an estimate of more than 100 million pounds.

Some places around the country that may put you in the Halloween mood are: Transylvania County, N.C.; Tombstone, Ariz.; Pumpkin Center, N.C.; Cape Fear, N.C.; and Skull Creek, Neb.

In 2010, each U.S. resident consumed the equivalent of 24.7 pounds of candy.