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OCTOBER
2026



Your Local Pet Resource Publication

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Santa Barbara
Digital Edition



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Did you know . . . !

It is unknown precisely where and when the phrase "trick or treat" was coined, but the custom had been firmly established in American popular culture by 1951, when trick-or-treating was depicted in the Peanuts comic strip. In 1952, Disney produced a cartoon called "Trick or Treat" featuring Donald Duck and his nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie.

Good v Bad Luck.....?

"A common superstition is the belief that opening an umbrella inside a house causes bad luck. The origin of this is that the umbrella acts as a shield against the sun or rain outdoors. To open it indoors offends the spirit of the umbrella, and will cause bad luck to occur as a result."



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Barks & Meow's Express!
SANTA BARBARA - OCT 2026

WARDING OFF GHOSTS

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. To keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

HALLOWEEN TRIVIA

- *When candy corn was first created in the 1880s by the Wunderle Candy Company, it was sold in boxes featuring a rooster logo under the literal name "Chicken Feed" during an era when many candies were named after farm goods.
- *An old Halloween superstition is, people at one time believed that Satan was a nut-gatherer, so, on Halloween night, nuts were used as magic charms.
- *The original name of the famous chocolate-and-peanut-butter candy, created by H.B. Reese before it became widely known as Reese's Peanut Butter Cups back in 1928 as "Penny Cups", because they were sold individually for one cent each in department stores.
- *Dogs are believed to be aware of the presence of ghosts, and their barking, whimpering or howling is often the first warning of supernatural occurrences.
- *In 1967, the Ouija Board ended up outselling the game of Monopoly. Over two million copies of the Ouija Board were sold.
- *Turnip Jack-o'-Lanterns: Long before American pumpkins, the Irish carved terrifying faces into hollowed-out turnips and beets with glowing embers inside to ward off the wandering soul of "Stingy Jack".
- *On Friday 13th, It is believed by superstitious people that you should never get out of bed on the opposite side to the one you got in on. If you do, you're at risk of something unlucky happening.
- *In ancient times, it was believed that witches became cats at night!

FUNNY JOKES

DOCTOR'S OFFICE JOKE

The orthopedic surgeon I work for was moving to a new office across town, and his staff was helping transport many of the items. I sat the display skeleton in the front of my car, his bony arm across the back of my seat. I hadn't considered the drive across town. And so, at one traffic light, the stares of the people in the car beside me became obvious, and I looked across and explained, "I'm delivering him to my doctor's office." The other driver leaned out of his window, "I hate to tell you, lady," he said, "but I think it's a bit too late for that!"

QUIZ

1. When was Bram Stoker's classic novel "Dracula" published?
2. What are the Sanderson sisters names in the movie Hocus Pocus?
3. In what year will the next full moon occur on Halloween?
4. Is a pumpkin botanically classified as a fruit or a vegetable?
5. What is the fear of Friday, 13th called?
6. What is the name of Harry Potter's first racing broom?

Answers

1. May 26th, 1897.
2. Winifred, Sarah, and Mary.
3. October 31, 2039.
4. Fruit.
5. Paraskevidekatriphobia.
6. Nimbus 2000.

PAW-SCOPES

DOGS:

Your dog is charming, easy going, and sociable. If you have friends over, let him or her be among your guests. They love dressing up in trick or treat costumes, but remember that human treats are not good for dogs. Make sure to have lots of special Halloween doggie treats available so they won't feel left out!

CATS:

Determination is the guiding force of the Cat...and it is indeed a force to be reckoned with. Felines in general are never easy to fathom and this particular feline is akin to a never-ending pit, being secretive, self-controlled and devious. You might find that Halloween may bring out some unusual behavior during this time. Call it a sixth sense!

Did you know . . . !

The famous quote from William Shakespeare's Macbeth is: *"Double, double, toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble."* Spoken by the Three Witches in Act IV, Scene 1, this chant accompanies the creation of a sinister potion intended to trap Macbeth in a web of destructive illusions.

Candy Apples

The fusion of Celtic and Roman traditions is behind Halloween's candy-apple staple. Samhain was around the time of the Roman festival honoring Pomona, the goddess of fruit trees. The goddess is often symbolized by an apple, so the fruit became synonymous with Samhain celebrations of the harvest.

! WARNING

**DON'T LEAVE DOGS
IN HOT CARS**

Myths & Superstitions

*If a bat flies into your house, beware! You may have some ghosts or spirits visiting!

*When spiders spin their webs before noon, sunny weather's coming soon.

*Through history in ancient Greece, Asia and America, Owls have been a symbol of wisdom and magic and bring good luck.

*If you walk into a spider web, you will meet a friend that day.

*In Greek superstition, salt has great purifying powers and can be used to ward off demons and evil spirits.

*Did you know, Selenophobia is a fear of the moon.

*It is said that if you ring bells on Halloween, it will chase away evil spirits.

***I love
My
Dog***



Q: What artist recorded the song "Ghostbusters"?

A: Ray Parker Jr.

Q: What do you call a group of witches?

A: A Coven.

Q: What is the name of the butler in "The Addams Family"?

A: Lurch.

DID YOU KNOW

Cucurbitaceae, commonly known as cucurbits or the gourd family, is a major family of flowering plants that includes everyday fruits and vegetables like pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers, watermelons, and melons.

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Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago, mostly in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and Northern France, celebrated their New Year on Nov 1st.

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Helena Avenue Bakery	131 Anacapa Street C	805-880-3383
Lama Dog/Funk Zone Tap Room	116 Santa Barbara Street	805-880-3364
Lama Dog/Uptown Tap Room	3435 State Street	805-940-0102
La Paloma Cafe	702 Anacapa Street	805-966-7029
Mesa Café & Bar	1972 Cliff Drive	805-966-5303
On The Alley	117 Harbor Way	805-962-6315
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Silly Halloween Q & A



- Q. What do goblins and ghosts drink when they're hot and thirsty on Halloween?
A. Ghoul-aid!!!
- Q. Who was the most famous witch detective?
A. Warlock Holmes
- Q. Where do most werewolves live?
A. In Howl-y-wood.
- Q: What happens when a flying witch breaks the sound barrier?
A: You hear the broom boom.
- Q. Why did the vampire go to the orthodontist?
A. To improve his bite...!
- Q: Which story do all little witches love to hear at bedtime?
A: "Ghoul Deluxe and the Three Scares."
- Q. Why did the skeleton climb a tree?
A. Because a dog was after its bones...
- Q. Where does a ghost go on vacation?
A. Mali-boo.
- Q. Which building does Dracula visit in New York?
A. The Vampire State Building.



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spook-tacular

HALLOWEEN WEEKEND AT VENTURA HARBOR

Howl-o-Ween

DOG COSTUME CONTEST

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2026



Date

October 24, 2026



Time

Start Time: 12:00 PM

End Time: 2:00 PM



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ME WANT **COOKIE...**
BUT DON'T
FORGET THE
DOG!

Happy Halloween from your Connection Concierge!

PUMPKIN PEANUT BUTTER BOO BITES

Healthy homemade treats for your dog!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter (xylitol-free)
- 2 1/2 cups oat flour
- 1 egg (or flax egg)
- 1 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 1/4 cup water (as needed)

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
- 2 In a bowl, mix pumpkin, peanut butter and egg until smooth.
- 3 Add oat flour and cinnamon. Mix until a dough forms.
- 4 Add a little water if needed to bring dough together.
- 5 Roll out dough on a floured surface. Cut into fun ghost or pumpkin shapes.
- 6 Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
- 7 Bake 20–25 minutes or until firm and lightly golden.
- 8 Cool completely before giving to your pup.



TREAT TIPS

- Store in an airtight container in the fridge up to 1 week.
- Always supervise and provide fresh water.

Made with love.

Approved by tails!

Thank you for being such a great part of our pet community!

Together, we make life pawsome!

PET-FRIENDLY HALLOWEEN WORD SEARCH

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C	A	N	D	Y	C	O	R	N	P	L	A	Y	F	U
S	P	O	O	K	Y	C	A	T	N	A	P	B	O	N
W	I	T	C	H	C	A	U	L	D	R	O	N	G	H
G	H	O	S	T	F	A	M	I	L	Y	K	I	T	Y
T	R	I	C	K	O	R	T	R	E	A	T	Y	O	F
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V	A	M	P	I	R	E	S	K	U	L	L	P	U	R
B	A	T	P	O	T	I	O	N	F	U	R	R	Y	E
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P	A	W	S	O	M	E	H	A	Y	R	I	D	E	S
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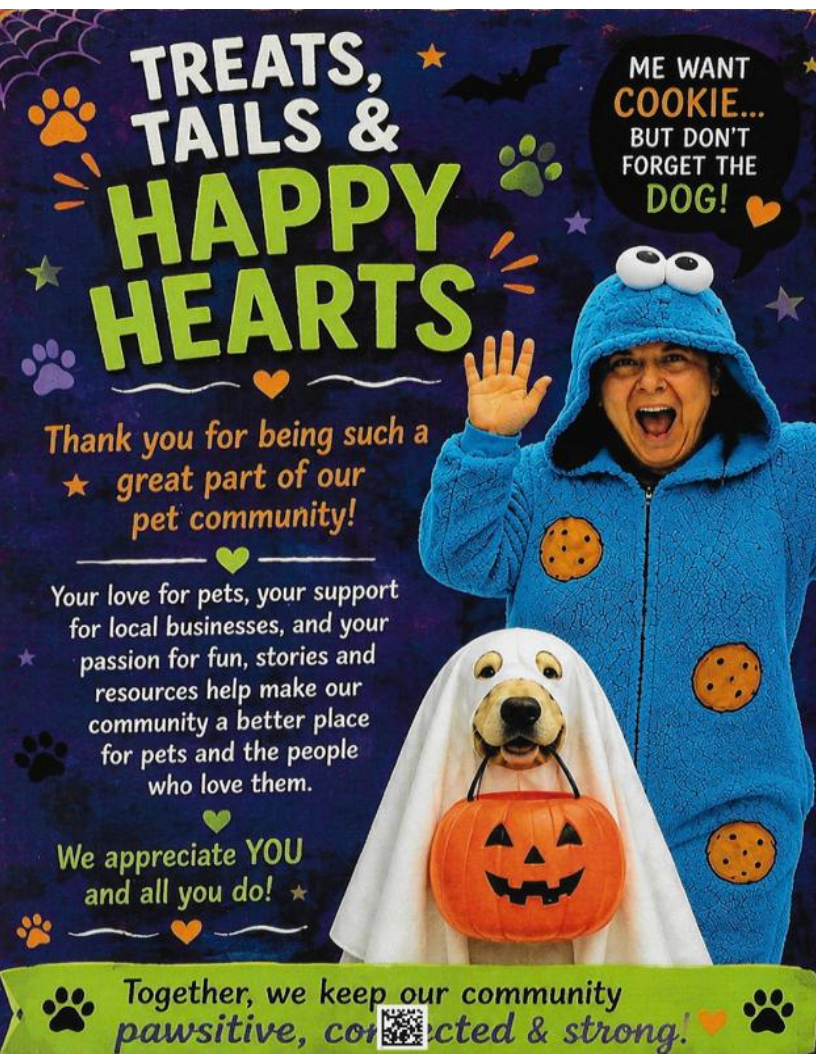
Thank you for being such a great part of our pet community!

Your love for pets, your support for local businesses, and your passion for fun, stories and resources help make our community a better place for pets and the people who love them.

We appreciate **YOU** and all you do!

Together, we keep our community pawsitive, connected & strong!

ME WANT **COOKIE...**
BUT DON'T
FORGET THE
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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Arroyo Burro Beach Park

Located at 2981 Cliff Drive, this county park is the portal for the best known off-leash spot in the Santa Barbara area. Dogs are required to be on leash through the parking lot and bathing beach until, passing Arroyo Burro Slough, dogs are welcome to run free and cavort in the Pacific Ocean surf below the city's Douglas Family Preserve. Self service dog wash stations provided by County Parks.

Hours: Daily from 8:00am - Dusk

TUCKERS GROVE PARK

Newly fenced off-leash area at Kiwanis Meadow is now open. The new play area is at the eastern end of the park, and is near ample parking and a public restroom. This area also provides easy access to the San Antonio Creek Trail, a mostly shaded 1.5-mile route that heads northeasterly to a trailhead at CA Route 154. Tucker's Grove County Park is located at intersection of Turnpike and Cathedral Oaks Roads.

Hours: Daily from 8:00am - Dusk

TORO CANYON PARK

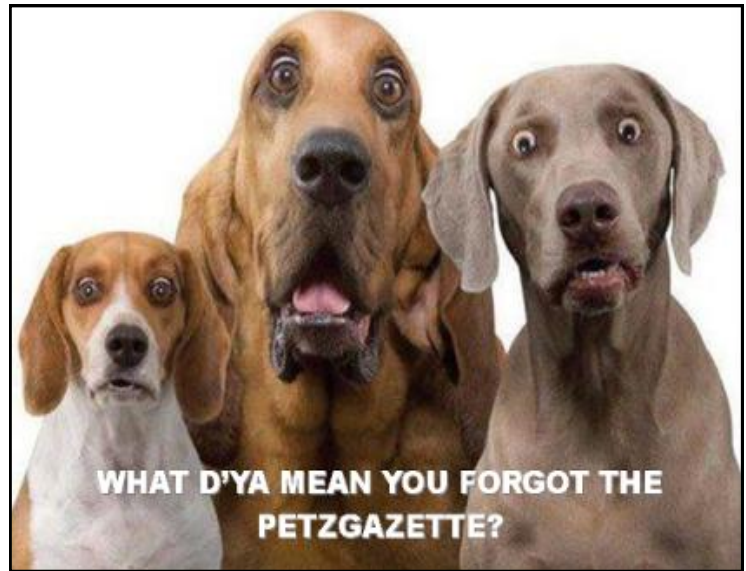
Located at the entry to this 74-acre wooded park, the off-leash canine play area consists of a fenced lawn area shaded by oak trees. Parking and restroom immediately adjacent. Address: 576 Toro Canyon Park Road.

Hours: Daily from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, and 4:00 PM to Sunset

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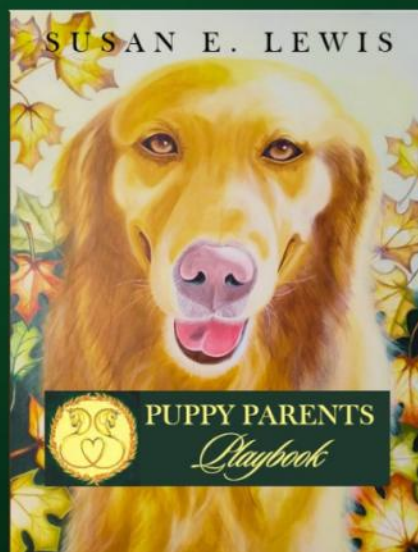
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Montecito Pet Hospital

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Santa Barbara Pet Hospital

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Valley Animal Hospital

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Goleta, CA 93117

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VCA Noah's Ark Animal Hospital

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If there are other Veterinary Services we may have missed, please let us know so they can be included in this list. THANK YOU
info@petgazette.com

HALLOWEEN

Pet Safety Tips



NO SWEETS FOR YOUR SWEETIE

Keep your pets away from candy (especially chocolate); avoid placing bowls on the ground.



KEEP PUMPKIN AWAY FROM THE PUMPKIN

Decorative plants can be toxic; candle-lit jack-o-lanterns are fire hazards if tipped over.



COSTUMES ARE OPTIONAL

Don't force on an unwanted costume. Most pets prefer birthday suits.



NO TRICK OR TREATER GREETERS

The front door is a high traffic area. Doorbells and knocks can upset even the friendliest pets.



MUST SHOW I.D.

Spooked pets can get lost. Microchip and tag them in case they get out.



PARTY POOPERS ARE OK

Some pets are happier in a quiet room away from the party.

Petz Gazette.com

Olde Folklore

The practice of "Burning the Nuts," a once solemn omen for a relationship's future, became the courting game of "Nut Crack Night."

New games like "Snap Apple" (the origin of bobbing for apples) emerged, where the focus was on community fun and competition and not supernatural revelation.

The rite of soul cakes:

Modern trick-or-treating evolved from this ancient ritual. On All Hallows' Eve, families offered "soul cakes" to visitors, who in return would pray for the souls of the family's deceased members. This transaction eventually transformed into the child-focused activity of collecting candy.

The original Jack-o'-Lantern: Before pumpkins, the Irish and Scottish carved grotesque faces into turnips and potatoes. A candle was lit inside to create a protective totem meant to ward off evil spirits. In America, the larger, native pumpkin was adopted and soon became the holiday's central icon.

A Witch's Hat:

The cone-shaped hat worn by most fictional witches is called a pointed hat. Pointed hats have been associated with witches for centuries. In fact, the earliest known depiction of a witch wearing a pointed hat is from a 14th-century manuscript. There are a few theories about why witches are associated with pointed hats.



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Spooky Tongue Twister Phrases



- He thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts.
- Creepy crawler critters crawl through creepy crawly craters.
- Dracula digs dreary, dark dungeons.
- Ghostly ghouls gather gleefully to golf on ghostly golf courses.
- Gobbling gargoyles gobbled gobbling goblins.
- Horribly hoarse hoot owls hoot howls of horror in halloween haunted houses.
- If big black bats could blow bubbles, how big of bubbles would big black bats blow?
- If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?
- Professional Pumpkin Pickers are prone to pick the plumpest pumpkins.
- Transylvanian Tree Trimmers are trained to trim the tallest Transylvanian trees.
- Several spooky slimy spiders spun sulking by the sea
- The ochre ogre ogled the poker.
- Six slippery snails, slid slowly seaward.
- Which witch wished which wicked wish.
- I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, But if you wish the wish the witch wishes, I won't wish the wish you wish to wish.



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Halloween Puns

One witch told another witch, "I want one of those new computers that has a spell checker."

Don't bother inviting the Invisible Man to your Halloween party. He won't show up. Sometimes he makes excuses, but they're all transparent.

You don't have to worry about Daylight Savings Time at Halloween. The holiday is always on Green Witch Mean Time.

Western Union opened an office in a graveyard so the spooks could send and receive cryptograms.

A vampire joined the police force so he could learn the correct way to get a stakeout.

I threw a boomerang at a ghost the other day. I knew it would come back to haunt me.

Halloween is going to be great - I can feel it in my bones!

I didn't want to play it safe with a skeleton costume, I want people to know I have guts.

Did you ever wonder where the whole Jack-o-Lantern thing came from? Well, before there were flashlights and glow sticks, Irish people used to carve out turnips and put a candle in them for a lantern. When they came to America, they noticed there weren't many turnips, but lots of pumpkins, so they used pumpkins instead!

DOG SUPERSTITIONS

Dogs have always been credited with the power of sensing supernatural influences, and seeing ghosts, spirits, faeries or deities which are invisible to human eyes. In Wales, only dogs could see the death-bringing hounds of Annwn; In ancient Greece the dogs were aware when Hecate was at a crossroads foretelling a death.

Did you know . . . !

*The first Halloween card was made in the early 1920's. These days, over 28 million Halloween cards are sent each year. U.S. consumers spend about \$50 million on Halloween greetings.

*Mary Shelly (1797 - 1851) published *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* Gothic novel when she was only 21. The novel was published in 1818 and is considered to be one of the first examples of science fiction.



YOUR PET'S GUT DESERVES BETTER.

The image displays two bags of Lucy Pet Foods. The background bag is blue and labeled "LUCY PET FORMULAS FOR LIFE DOG FOOD". The foreground bag is purple and labeled "LUCY PET FORMULAS FOR LIFE CAT FOOD". Both bags feature a circular logo with a heart and the text "BALANCED FOR GUT HEALTH". The purple bag also specifies "CHICKEN, BROWN RICE & PUMPKIN FORMULA" and "LIMITED INGREDIENT DIET".

Callouts with lines pointing to the bags:

- Boosts energy naturally. (points to the blue dog food bag)
- Tested in our own lab (points to the blue dog food bag)
- Prebiotic Fiber Blend (points to the bottom of the blue dog food bag)
- Strengthens immunity (points to the blue dog food bag)
- Supports heart health (points to the purple cat food bag)
- Good Poops (points to the purple cat food bag)



[LucyPetFoods.com](https://lucypetfoods.com)

OH! TO BE A WITCH

WITCHES PARKING



ALL OTHERS WILL BE TOAD

LIFE IS A WITCH
THEN YOU FLY

WITCH WAY



One Hour



Broom
Parking

VIOLATORS WILL BE TOAD

Where There's a Witch
There's a Way!

Don't Make Me Flip
My Witch ~~to~~ Switch.

the
Witch
is  in



I'M a
Witch
WITHOUT
coffee

THE HALLOWEEN HOUSE RULES



Costumes are encouraged.



The porch light stays on.



There is always room for one more.



Candy may be eaten before supper.



Ghost stories begin after dark.



Cider stays warm on the stove.



Anyone who screams during the movie makes the popcorn.



Black cats are always welcome.



No one goes to bed until the last trick-or-treater has gone home.





Halloween is celebrated in many different ways
around the world.

Here's a few examples:

China: The Hungry Ghost Festival, celebrated in the summer, is a time to honor ancestors by leaving food and drink out for their spirits.

Japan: The Obon festival includes haunted houses, parades, dancing, and boats lit with lanterns.

Guatemala: The Festival de Barriletes Gigantes, or "giant kites" festival, is an ancient Mayan tradition that involves flying kites over graves.

Italy: Ognissanti, or "all saints", is celebrated on November 1, and in Sicily, the deceased are said to bring gifts to children.

Haiti: The Festival of the Dead, or Fet Gede, is celebrated on November 1 and 2, and involves dancing in the streets and walking through graveyards.

Austria: Martinis are celebrated on November 11 with costumes and a lantern procession.

Belgium: Some villages celebrate Halloween, while others celebrate All Saints' Day.

South Korea: Itaewon in Seoul hosts festivities including live music, costume contests, and dancing.

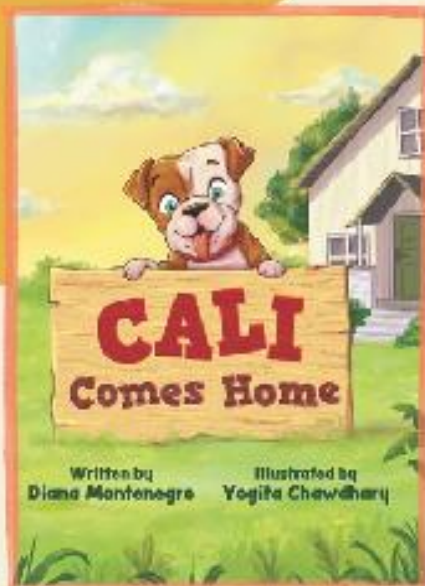
Thailand: Expats celebrate with special Halloween bashes at major nightlife spots.

Greece: Expatriates and tourists celebrate in hotels and bars.

Brazil: Brazil celebrates Halloween, or Dia das Bruxas (Witch's Day), on October 31st with costume parties and other festivities.

THE SOUL DOG BOOK SERIES

By: Diana Montenegro



At It's Heart: Cali Comes Homes is about...

- ✿ The meaning of "forever home"
- ✿ The joy of pet adoption
- ✿ The special bond between humans and their soul dogs
- ✿ Kindness, compassion, and the importance of dog rescue



First-time author and educator Diana Montenegro spent years helping students find their voice and love of reading. But her most meaningful story began with a dog named Cali. Cali was more than a pet; she was Diana's "soul dog." Their bond was immediate, deep, and life-changing. Tragically, Cali passed away before her third birthday, and in the midst of that heartbreak, Diana began The Soul Dog Series, writing *Cali Comes Home* as the first book in the series to honor and continue Cali's legacy.

She **donates a portion of the proceeds** from her books to animal rescue organizations—the same kind of organizations that gave Cali and her mother a chance at life. Through her writing, she hopes not only to inspire children to read but also to teach them the importance of adoption, empathy, and giving back. Her goal is to spark joy, build literacy, and help others discover their own "soul dog" while keeping Cali's memory alive.

Now joined by her dog Chloe, who is also featured in the book, Diana visits schools, bookstores, and community events, creating meaningful, interactive experiences where children can connect stories to real-life relationships with animals. Please follow along on Instagram to see the series grow.



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OCTOBER MEMES



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Bubbles Dog Rescue		Santa Monica
C.A.R.L.	805-644-7387	Call for Details
Cassie's Cat Cafe	805-232-4228	Ventura
Cats at the Studios	818-341-8936	Call for Details
Cat's Cradle Rescue	805-485-8811	Ventura
DaisyLu Ranch		Camarillo
Dobies & Little Paws	805-524-5102	Fillmore
Dog Days Search & Rescue	805-551-9706	Simi Valley
Eastwood Ranch Rescue/Adoption Ctr	818-338-1551	Agoura Hills
Furry Funding	855-777-7007	Westlake Village
Healthcare for Homeless Anim.	818-483-4228	Ventura County
Herman Bennett Foundation	805-445-7171	Ventura County
Humane Society of Ven. Co	805-646-6505	Ojai
Karma Rescue	310-512-7833	Los Angeles
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LIFE Rescue	818-707-2007	Westlake Village
Lucy Pet Foundation	805-499-5829	Thousand Oaks
Mad Love Animal Rescue		Los Angeles
Military Animal Project	805-557-8580	Ventura County
Paw Works	805-852-1744	Ventura County
Purrmaid Café & Adoption Center	805-419-6116	Camarillo
Purrrlandia Cat Lounge & Cafe	818-230-2724	Thousand Oaks
Save A Rescue	818-270-4950	Nationwide
Shelter Hope Pet Shop	805-379-3538	Thousand Oaks
Serenity Place Rescue	818-999-4022	Call for Details
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QUIRKY HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS

Itchy Palms Mean Money

An itchy right palm supposedly means money is coming, and an itchy left means it's leaving, though which palm does which flips depending on who taught you. The belief traces back through European folklore connecting the hands to receiving and giving.

Ringing Ears

A sudden ringing in your ear traditionally means someone is talking about you. Older versions were spookier: the sound was a message, or a warning, from the spirit world.

Lucky Pennies

Find a penny heads up and it's luck; tails up and some people won't touch it. The roots likely reach back to when metal itself was considered a gift from the gods, and any found coin was a small blessing.

Crossing Your Fingers

The crossed fingers likely began as an invocation of the cross for protection, possibly from eras when the gesture had to be hidden or shared between two people. Over time it shrank to one hand and became casual.

Shoes on the Table

In British tradition, shoes on a table invite death into the house. One grim explanation ties it to mining communities, where a dead miner's boots were placed on the table as notice to the family.

The Empty Rocking Chair

An empty rocking chair rocking on its own is bad enough. Irish folklore went further: leaving a chair rocking was an open invitation for a spirit to sit down, bringing death or misfortune to the household.

Whistling Indoors and After Dark

Across several cultures, whistling in the wrong place or time is asking for trouble. Russian tradition says whistling indoors whistles your money away, while other folklore warns that whistling at night calls spirits, or snakes, to you. Sailors banned casual whistling too, believing it could literally whistle up a storm.

Sweeping Someone's Feet

In Southern U.S. and Caribbean folklore, sweeping a broom across someone's feet curses their marriage prospects, or worse, sweeps them toward jail or death. The remedy, in some versions, is to spit on the broom immediately. Brooms carry heavy folklore everywhere, since they touch both dirt and thresholds. Never underestimate an object that guards the doorway.

Opening an Umbrella Indoors

One story dates this to ancient Egypt, where parasols honored the sun and opening one indoors, away from the sun, insulted it. A more practical theory blames Victorian umbrellas, spring-loaded contraptions that could genuinely injure someone in a parlor.

A Bird in the House

A wild bird flying into the house has long been read as a death omen, especially if it circles a room or lands on a chair. Birds were seen as messengers between worlds, so one indoors meant a message had arrived for someone.

The Owl's Call

Owls have played the death messenger in folklore from ancient Rome to Appalachia, where an owl calling near a house, or worse, calling your name, foretold a passing. Their silent flight and night vision made them natural suspects.

Someone Walked Over Your Grave

That sudden, unexplained shiver got an explanation centuries ago: someone just walked over the spot where you'll eventually be buried. The phrase appears in English writing back to the 1700s.

Covering Mirrors After a Death

In many traditions, from Victorian Britain to Jewish mourning custom, mirrors in a house of mourning are covered. The folk-belief version held that a soul could become trapped in the mirror, or that the next person to see their reflection would follow the deceased.

Holding Your Breath Past a Cemetery

The schoolyard version says hold your breath or the spirits will get jealous of your breathing. Older versions warn you might inhale a wandering soul outright.

QUIRKY HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS - continued

The Theater Ghost Light

Nearly every theater leaves a single bare bulb burning on stage all night, the ghost light. The practical reason is not falling into the orchestra pit in the dark. The traditional reason is better: every theater has ghosts, and the light either keeps them at bay or gives them enough light to perform, keeping them content. Professional stagehands maintain this ritual in gleaming modern venues, and no one is eager to be the first to skip it.

Saying “Bless You”

The reflexive blessing after a sneeze carries multiple spooky origin stories. One holds that a sneeze briefly expelled the soul, leaving the body open for something else to move in unless a blessing sealed the door. Another ties it to plague eras, when a sneeze could be a death sentence and the blessing was sincere.

The Horseshoe Over the Door

The horseshoe combines two ancient protections: iron, which spirits and fairies supposedly cannot abide, and the crescent shape, a luck symbol across many cultures. Nailed over a door, it guarded the home's most vulnerable point. The eternal argument is orientation. Points up holds the luck in a cup; points down pours the luck onto everyone who enters.

Knocking on Wood

Say something hopeful out loud and the tax is immediate: knock on wood. The leading theory ties it to old beliefs that spirits lived in trees, and knocking either woke the protective ones or drowned out your boast so jealous ones couldn't hear it. It may be the single most practiced superstition in the Western world, performed daily by devout skeptics. People will knock on laminate, particleboard, or their own heads, because the ritual matters more than the lumber.

Spilled Salt

Salt was once genuinely precious, used as currency and preservation, so spilling it was real loss before it was bad luck. Folklore added that spilled salt was the Devil's invitation, and a famous painting showing a spilled salt cellar in front of a betrayer didn't help its reputation. The repair ritual survives intact: throw a pinch over your left shoulder, straight into the eyes of the Devil waiting there.

Walking Under a Ladder

A leaning ladder forms a triangle with the wall and ground, and one old explanation holds that walking through it broke a sacred shape, echoing the Trinity. Earlier associations were grimmer: ladders leaned against gallows, and passing beneath meant walking the condemned's path.

The Broken Mirror

Seven years of bad luck for a broken mirror combines two old ideas: that reflections held a piece of your soul, and a Roman-era belief that life renewed itself in seven-year cycles. Break the mirror, damage the soul, wait out the cycle.

Friday the 13th

Thirteen was distrusted long before the slasher films: thirteen guests at the Last Supper, and in Norse myth, a thirteenth god crashing a dinner that ended in death. Fridays carried their own dark reputation as the day of the Crucifixion and, historically, the customary day for executions.

Fuse the unlucky number with the unlucky day and you get a date some people genuinely rearrange their lives around. There are several clinical names for the fear, i.e., Friggatriskaidekaphobia or Paraskevidekatriaphobia, and some estimates suggest real money in delayed flights and postponed decisions every time the date rolls around, though the figures are rough. Meanwhile hotels and towers still commonly skip the 13th floor on the elevator panel. The 14th floor is the 13th floor wearing a name tag, and everyone has silently agreed not to mention it.

The Black Cat Crossing Your Path

The most famous spooky superstition on earth is also the most unfairly assigned. The black cat began as a sacred animal: ancient Egyptians revered cats so completely that harming one carried severe punishment. The fall came in medieval Europe, when church authorities linked cats to witchcraft and heresy. A black cat crossing your path was reframed as a witch, or the Devil, cutting across your way, and Puritans shipped that fear straight to America. Here's the twist most people never learn: in Britain, Ireland, and Japan, a black cat crossing your path is traditionally good luck. Sailors' wives kept black cats to protect husbands at sea, and a black cat at a wedding was a blessing. So the same cat, same crossing, means opposite fortunes depending on which side of an ocean you learned your superstitions.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

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