



# halloween hot spots

Yeah, you *could* buy bags of mini Snickers and dust off your French-maid costume. Or you could make a trip of it: We've scoured the country and found the **biggest** and **best** Halloween **celebrations**. You'll meet real-life Munsters, pumpkin paparazzi and cheerful innkeepers who refuse to give up their ghosts.

BY KAREN CATCHPOLE

Halloween at  
the Roger  
Williams Park Zoo,  
Providence,  
Rhode Island



## FOR A DARING COUPLE A SLEEPOVER IN A HAUNTED ROOM

Santa Fe

**THE DEAL** Julia Staab, the former owner of **La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa** (330 E. Palace Ave., 505-986-0000, [laposada.rockresorts.com](http://laposada.rockresorts.com); doubles from \$320), died in 1896, and legend has it she never really left. Plenty of people have seen her ghost: One recent guest asked if a Victorian-era movie was being filmed, because he spied a woman in an old-fashioned dress roaming the hall. This year there's a reception on Halloween. The lucky winner of a drawing will spend the night in Julia's old bedroom, plus score a \$50 credit to use toward a spa treatment—something we bet that person will need. Mention you're an *Every Day with Rachael Ray* reader when you book a room for the holiday and receive an exclusive cooking class with the hotel chef—an \$85-per-person value.



Southfork Ranch



**WHILE IN TOWN** Browse the craft stalls around the central plaza to find deals on handmade jewelry. Skip the neighboring Southwestern restaurants and walk to **Cowgirl BBQ** (319 S. Guadalupe St., 505-982-2565; entrées from \$10), a casual indoor and outdoor eatery with a lively crowd, tasty ribs and strong margaritas. Then book a massage at **The Inn of Five Graces** (150 E. DeVargas St., 505-992-0957, [fivegraces.com](http://fivegraces.com); from \$110), where you'll be rubbed down with a seasonal pumpkin oil; turns out the gourd is great for your skin, full of vitamins and antioxidants. Snack on freshly roasted pumpkin seeds after your treatment.

**QUICK HIT** Buy seasons one and two of *The Munsters* (\$79, [tvaddicts.tv](http://tvaddicts.tv)). Or watch another famously freaky clan take the stage: *The Addams Family* musical stars Bebe Neuwirth and Nathan Lane and previews November 13 at Chicago's Ford Center for the Performing Arts ([broadwayinchicago.com](http://broadwayinchicago.com); tickets from \$28).

**QUICK HIT** Curl up with *New Mexico Ghost Stories* by Antonio R. Garcez (505-550-3690 for a \$24 autographed copy), who has spent 50-plus years collecting real-life tales of terror, including one involving Albuquerque teenagers, a Ouija board and a lusty ghost.

**We dare you.**  
To find other—forgive us—spired rooms, go to [bedandbreakfast.com](http://bedandbreakfast.com). The site compiles an annual list of the country's best haunted inns and B&Bs.



La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa

## FOR A GROUP OF PALS A COSTUME PARTY AT THE MUNSTER MANSION

Waxahachie, Texas

**THE DEAL** Sandra and Charles McKee spent more than \$300,000 to make their home into a perfect replica of the **Munster Mansion** (from the classic 1960s TV series, for those too young to remember). Every year the McKees open their doors for Halloween (October 30–31, [munstermansion.com](http://munstermansion.com); \$20 adults, \$12 children), and thousands—including the occasional *Munsters* cast member—bop to the DJ's beats, eat hot dogs and corn on the cob and watch a puppet show. The McKees, not surprisingly, dress as Herman and Lily Munster.

**WHILE IN TOWN** Book a room at the large, newly remodeled **Southfork Hotel** in Plano (1600 North Central Expy., 972-578-8555, [southforkhotel.com](http://southforkhotel.com); doubles from \$100), and keep the classic-TV theme going by taking a tour of the **Southfork Ranch** (972-442-7800, [southforkranch.com](http://southforkranch.com); \$9.50 adults, \$7 children), also known as the Ewing mansion from the TV series *Dallas*. In Waxahachie, visit the famous haunted **Catfish Plantation** (814 Water St., 972-937-9468; entrées from \$12), where chicken-fried steak, black-eyed peas and catfish are served with a side of ghost stories, all about the three spirits said to roam the place.



**QUICK HIT**  
Make your own jack-o'-lantern and be the envy of every DIY-er on the block. Log onto [pumpkinglow.com](http://pumpkinglow.com) for a range of totally un-Halloween designs (like Mona Lisa's face or a koala bear). Choose your fave and download a free pdf of a stencil pattern.



## FOR THE WHOLE FAM THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Keene, New Hampshire

**THE DEAL** The Pumpkin Festival in Keene, New Hampshire (Main Street, 603-358-5344, [pumpkinfestival.org](http://pumpkinfestival.org); free), recognized by Guinness World Records as the largest gathering of carved pumpkins in the world, attracts 25,000 pumpkins and more than 50,000 spectators. Get there when it opens, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 17, to squeeze in as much gourd carving, pie eating and seed spitting as you can. Stay till 5 p.m. for the dramatic lighting of all those jack-o'-lanterns.

**WHILE IN TOWN** Twenty minutes outside of Keene is the **Chesterfield Inn** (20 Cross Road, West Chesterfield, 603-256-3211, [chesterfieldinn.com](http://chesterfieldinn.com); doubles from \$200), which has 15 beautifully decorated rooms and a full country breakfast. For lunch, order wings at **Elm City Restaurant & Brewery** (222 West St., Colony Mill Marketplace, 603-355-3335; entrées from \$18), which brews its own beer, including Pumpkin Fest Ale, made with local pumpkins and spices. At happy hour, pints are \$2 and wings are 35 cents each. End the night with a strike at **Yankee Lanes Keene** (477 Park Ave., [yankeelaneskeene.com](http://yankeelaneskeene.com); \$23 per hour for a lane rental). Marvel at the light weight of your bowling ball compared to a pumpkin.

## Halloween Parades



### THE BIGGEST New York City

Started in 1972, New York City's Halloween parade now draws 50,000 participants and 2 million spectators, who can be just as interesting to watch. One year, a group of more than 20 dressed as Imelda Marcos' shoes. (October 31, 7-10 p.m., [halloween-nyc.com](http://halloween-nyc.com))



### THE OLDEST Anoka, Minnesota

The official Halloween Capital of the World (Congress bestowed the title in 1937) has three separate parades, including one that dates back to 1920. The celebrations attract 50,000 people to the town, which is 20 minutes from Minneapolis and whose population is less than 20,000. (October 31, 1 p.m., [anokahalloween.com](http://anokahalloween.com))



### THE HAIRIEST Long Beach, California

The Haute Dog Howl'oween Parade (their puns, not ours) is expected to host 700 costumed dogs and their very enthusiastic owners. The event doubles as an adoption fair, and proceeds benefit the nonprofit Community Action Team, which raises money for environmental, youth and animal welfare projects. (October 31, 2:30 p.m., [howloween.info](http://howloween.info); \$10 in advance, \$20 at the door)

## FOR CULTURE HOUNDS THE BEST DAY OF THE DEAD FIESTA

Los Angeles

**THE DEAL** On the first two days of November, families across Mexico celebrate **Día de los Muertos**, or **Day of the Dead**, a surprisingly upbeat remembrance of the dearly departed. Graves are decorated with marigolds and gifts like toys and tequila. Home altars are constructed—with sugar skulls, food, candles, pictures and other personal effects—to entice souls back to earth for a day or two. In L.A. you can take part by visiting the **Hollywood Forever Cemetery** to pay homage to some of your favorite dead celebrities, like Jayne Mansfield and Johnny Ramone. The 10th annual celebration on October 24 (6000 Santa Monica Blvd., [ladyofthedeath.com](http://ladyofthedeath.com); \$10 adults, \$3 children) will attract tens of thousands of people, most of whom will alternate between placing homemade altars around the cemetery and eating tacos.

**WHILE IN TOWN** **Mama's Hot Tamales** (2122 W. 7th St., 213-487-7474) is famous year-round, but come Día de los Muertos, the restaurant becomes a gathering place for festivalgoers, who love the variety (turkey mole, strawberry) and the price (\$2.50 each). Eat up, then check into the **Sportsmen's Lodge Hotel** in Studio City (12825 Ventura Blvd., 818-769-4700, [shtotel.com](http://shtotel.com); mention Every Day with Rachael Ray when booking and pay \$99 for a double), which hosted Clark Gable and Katharine Hepburn back in the day, and Tim McGraw and David Lee Roth more recently. A \$1 million renovation in 2008 upgraded the place, but it has kept the classic Hollywood feel. There's an Olympic-size swimming pool and free shuttle service to theme park **Universal Studios** ([universalstudioshollywood.com](http://universalstudioshollywood.com); \$67 adults, \$57 children 4 feet and under), where the original *Jaws* model will scare you out of your wits.

 **QUICK HIT** Try the dense, slightly sweet **Pan de Muerto**, or "bread of the dead." You don't have to kill the whole day baking—order one that's large enough to feed a dozen of your favorite mourner-slash-revelers (\$25, [mexgrocer.com](http://mexgrocer.com)).



## FOR MOVIE BUFFS THE BEST HORROR FILM FEST

Providence, Rhode Island

**THE DEAL** There are dozens of Halloween slasher film festivals playing around the country, but the **Rhode Island International Horror Film Festival** (October 22–25, [film-festival.org/Horror\\_ri.php](http://film-festival.org/Horror_ri.php); entry fees from \$10) is one of the most prestigious—some movies make their world debuts here. This year there will be nearly 50 features, including silent films (accompanied by live music) and Japanese anime. Because cult gore writer H.P. Lovecraft lived and died in Providence, the festival includes a 90-minute walking tour of his home and stomping grounds (\$15, which includes a ticket to a film screening).

**WHILE IN TOWN** Hit up the **Roger Williams Park Zoo** in the evening to see 10,000 glowing carved pumpkins on display (6–11 p.m. daily through October, 1000 Elmwood Ave., 401-785-3510; \$12 adults, \$9 children). Stay at **Hotel Providence** (139 Mathewson St., 800-861-8990, [hotelprovidence.com](http://hotelprovidence.com); doubles from \$189), where each of the 80 rooms features original artwork by local great Nancy Friese. Have dinner at City Hall; after 5 p.m. the mobile **Haven Bros. Diner** (25 Dorrance St.) pulls up to serve milkshakes, chili dogs and a Murder Burger, stuffed with tons of condiments plus bacon, cheese and chili. To drink, order coffee milk, the creamy local favorite beloved by kids and adults.

 **QUICK HIT** To commemorate horror classic *Hellraiser's* 20th anniversary, a collection has been released that includes *Hellraiser* and *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, plus the brand-new Blu-ray version of the original film (\$28, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)).

