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**COVID-19**

# How Will the Halloween Retail Season Be During COVID?

Like many holidays this year, Americans are planning to celebrate Halloween despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The autumnal holiday may look a little different this year, but consumers are finding ways to safely mark the occasion.

Sep. 21, 2020



More than 148 million U.S. adults and their children still plan to participate in Halloween-related activities, even with the ongoing coronavirus situation. Among those celebrants, safe at-home activities ranked highest: 53 percent plan to decorate their homes, 46 percent plan to carve a pumpkin and 18 percent will dress up their pets.

“Consumers continue to place importance on celebrating our traditional holidays, even if by untraditional standards,” NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay said. “Retailers are prepared to meet the increased demand for seasonal décor, costumes and other items that allow families the opportunity to observe Halloween safely.”

More than three-quarters say the virus is impacting their celebration plans, with overall participation down to 58 percent. Plans for parties, trick-or-treating,

handing out candy and visiting haunted houses have all dropped, due largely to the fact that some activities do not easily adhere to social distancing. Even so, 17 percent say they plan to celebrate virtually.

Consumer spending is expected to reach \$8.05 billion, down slightly from \$8.78 billion in 2019, due to the drop in participation. However, consumers are spending more on the activities that will ensure a memorable holiday. Those who are celebrating plan to spend \$92.12 on average compared with \$86.27 in 2019. Consumers are doing what they can to still make it a special event by spending a little more on home decorations, candy and greeting [cards](#).

“Some of the most interesting data concerns younger generations, consumers ages 18-24,” Prosper Insights Executive Vice President of Strategy Phil Rist said. “Although fewer are celebrating this year, the ones who are aren’t shying away from Halloween-related purchases, spending \$11 more on average, primarily on decorations and candy.”

With extra time on consumers’ hands, Halloween shopping is starting earlier with four in 10 planning to begin their shopping in September or earlier. While fewer might be heading to stores, the top shopping destinations remain the same: discount

stores, specialty Halloween stores, grocery stores and online retailers. Shoppers continue to prefer online shopping as a safe and convenient option during the pandemic. This year, 30 percent plan to make their Halloween purchases online, compared with 25 percent last year.

### *Costumes Ranked: **Children***

More than 2.7 million children plan to dress as their favorite princess character, more than 1.8 million as Spiderman, more than 1.6 million as their favorite superhero, more than 1.3 million as a ghost, and another 1.3 million will dress as Batman.

### *Costumes Ranked: **Adults***

Nearly 70 percent of adults planning to dress up already know what their costume will be this year. More than 4.6 million adults plan to dress like a witch, more than 1.7 million as a vampire, more than 1.3 million as a cat, more than 1.1 million as Batman, and more than 1 million as a ghost.

### *Costumes Ranked: **Pets***

Popularity for pet costumes continues this year: 10 percent of pet lovers will dress their animal in a pumpkin costume, while 6 percent will dress their cat or dog as a hot dog, 5 percent as a superhero and 3 percent as a cat.

The survey asked 7,644 consumers about Halloween shopping plans. It was conducted September 1-9 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points.

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