

"Deliciously Exciting Halloween with Candies & Cake"

What does Halloween bring to mind for you? Is it ghosts and goblins? Jack o'lanterns and bobbing for apples? Or is it feasting on candy and lots of other delicious treats?

It may surprise you that history points to a more serious beginning to the holiday that we enjoy today. In the olden days of Europe, spirits of those departed were believed to visit their relatives in search of warmth and good cheer as winter approached. Halloween was also a time of year for harvesting and food preparation for the coming winter. When spirits approached the villages of these citizens of old, they would be welcomed with a banquet including all of the foods recently harvested.

This year you can make a Halloween banquet for your family with the highlight of your table being the "Wickedly Delicious Witch Cake." Parents can follow the easy recipe for a tasty yellow cake. Icing is a sweet concoction of sugar, milk and a touch of food coloring. The fun begins when the kids help to bring the "Wickedly Delicious Witch" to life. Jelly beans, licorice and candy corn can help to shape the body of the witch, while confectioners' sugar, milk and some imagination bring form to the witch's face. Enjoy this cake with just the lights of your jack o'lantern flickering, tell a spooky ghost story or two and the kids will think friendly spirits have come to visit.

A goodie-laden banquet table is but one of the customs that you can share with your family this Halloween. Many traditional holiday symbols and practices appeared in the United States in the late 1800s—witches, black cats, jack o'lanterns and "trick or treat" masks. Have the kids create scary faces on one another using make-up rather than stiff, formed plastic. Bob for apples and make the winning prize an extra special treat.

Halloween should also mean safety for you and your kids.



Wickedly Delicious Witch Cake

The National Confectioners Association recommends that everyone observe the following Halloween safety tips:

- Wear light-colored clothing short enough to prevent tripping, and add reflectors
- Make sure your children can see well through face masks
- Accompany young children
- Go out in daylight and carry a flashlight in case of delay
- Stay within the neighborhood and only visit homes you know
- Watch for traffic
- Only give or accept wrapped or packaged candy
- Examine candy before allowing children to eat it

- 1 package (18-1/2 ounces) any flavor cake mix
- 1 can (16 ounces) vanilla frosting
- Red and yellow food coloring

Decorations:

- Black licorice (shoestring and wide)
- Yellow corn candies
- Pumpkin candies
- Orange fruit slices
- Black and orange jelly beans
- Black licorice squares
- Black and white twisted stick candy
- Large and small candy corn
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon water

Prepare cake mix according to package directions; bake in a 13 x 9-inch pan. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack. Set cake on tray or board; brush away excess crumbs.

Tint frosting with 1 drop red and 2 drops yellow food coloring. Frost top and sides of cake. Cut wide black licorice into strips; use to make a fence along bottom of cake, pressing licorice gently into frosting. Decorate fence with yellow corn candy and pumpkins that have been cut in half. Make moon shape in top left corner with orange fruit slices and orange jelly beans. Make witch's dress with licorice squares. Cut peppermint stick into 2-inch pieces and one 3/4-inch piece. Use to make broom stick. Use small candy corn for hands holding broom stick, and for bottom of stick to resemble a broom. Mix confectioners' sugar with water to form a smooth ball. Pat out onto a smooth surface; cut out witch's face with sharp knife. Carefully lift with metal spatula and place on cake. Use black shoestring licorice for hair. Make brim of hat with black jelly beans; make a band on top of brim with black candies. Make peak of hat with jelly beans. Arrange pumpkins and large candy corn around bottom of cake.

Yield: One 9 x 13-inch cake; 12 to 15 servings.