



THE PARTY GODDESS! PRESENTS

The Ultimate Halloween Guide

2026 Edition

Your complete guide to throwing the Halloween party
they will talk about until Christmas!

by Marley Majcher



@thepartygoddess

WHY THIS YEAR IS DIFFERENT

13.5 billion reasons to throw the party.

Americans are about to spend a record 13.5 BILLION on Halloween. 74% of us are celebrating. That is basically everybody, spending about 115 a head on candy, costumes, and decor.

And here is the kicker: Halloween falls on a SATURDAY this year.

No work the next morning. Your guests have choices, and every party on the block is competing for them. So you bring the vibe, you batch the drink, and you plan like the professional you are about to become.

This playbook is everything I know about Halloween parties, distilled: the trends worth stealing, the timelines, the drinks, the decor tricks, and the answers to every question you would otherwise panic-Google at midnight.

RULE NUMBER ONE

Pick a color story, not a costume theme.

"Navy and gold" tells your guests everything. "Wear a costume" tells them nothing. A color story is a dress code, a decor plan, and a filter for every decision — including the candy.

The 2026 color stories

Bound by Magic

My top pick — build the seance dinner party here. Deep navy + antique gold. Tarot, zodiac, fortune tellers.

Enchanted Romance

Crimson + black. Heart-and-dagger, dark florals, doomed-lovers energy.

Disco Halloween

Silver + black + hot pink lip. Mirrored pumpkins, disco-ball spiders. Pure joy.

Vintage Spirits

Classic orange + black, checkerboard, retro cats. The family-crowd no-brainer.

Mischief & Magic

Pink + aqua + orange. Disco ghosts, pastel pumpkins. The kids-and-teens pick.

Hallowed Halls

Emerald + antique brass + black. Gothic library, candlelit everything.

MY TOP PICK FOR 2026

Bound by Magic: the seance dinner party



Deep navy and antique gold. Vintage carnival sideshow meets magician's parlor. Candlelight, tarot cards as place settings, a palm reader in the corner — every party I have ever done with a palm reader has had a line out the door. Book one now.

The DIY version

Tea-stain old books. Decoupage bottles with chants and "evil spells." Put all your crystals out. Anything plastic? Spray paint it gold or bronze. Broken jewelry cascading out of vases. Random feathers. And those stubby, bent, half-melted candles you cannot throw out but cannot use at a "nice" party? This is their moment. Use them all up.

NO-KNIFE PUMPKINS

The Jeweled Pumpkin

Skip the knife — no carving, no ER trips. You need: one pumpkin, a glue gun, ribbon, sequins, glitter, colored thumbtacks, colored duct tape. Glue in your color story, thumbtack the details. Lasts through Thanksgiving.

The six rules underneath it all



- **Lighting is 99% of your atmosphere.**

A garage looks good if it is dark enough. Dimmers everywhere, weird shadows, spotlights. Go.

- **Do not forget scent.**

Cloves and apple juice simmering on the stove, or a good musky candle. Atmosphere is a full-sense sport.

- **One signature cocktail.**

Not a full bar — one drink with a moment. Served in a syringe. Obviously. (Recipes on page 8.)

- **One interactive moment.**

Tarot reader, treat station, garland bar, apothecary jars. One thing done well.

- **Do not over-cater.**

Heavy hors d'oeuvres, not a seated dinner. Nobody came for the seating chart — they came for the vibes.

- **Smoke machine: buy extra fuel.**

The bottle says six hours; it lasts 45 minutes. Cycle it on and off.

Even a garage can look good if it's dark enough and draped with enough curtains or sheets — and mulled apple cider on the stove.

THE COUNTDOWN

Your party timeline

Two weeks out

- Send the invitations (even an e-vite counts — no invite, no party).
- Pick your color story and commit. Tell guests the dress code now.
- Book the palm reader / tarot reader / any human entertainment.
- Thrift run: jars, frames, candlesticks, anything spray-paintable.

One week out

- Liquor run. Batch-test the signature cocktail on yourself. For science.
- Grocery run — shelf-stable stuff now; fresh stuff three days out.
- Build the decor: apothecary bottles, garlands, spray-paint everything.
- Charge every battery-operated light you own. Buy the smoke machine fuel. Then buy more.
- Confirm the headcount. Over-invite — ever since COVID, people drop like flies.

Day before

- Set tables, hang ghosts, place every candle. Cook what can be prepped, batch the drink, shower.

Hour before

- Lights low, scent on, playlist on, smoke machine test.
- Light the trip hazards. Keep it atmospherically dark, not lawsuit dark.
- Eat something. Drink water. You are the host — pace yourself, goddess.

Budget decor that looks expensive



You do NOT need a big budget to throw a Halloween party that looks expensive. Some of my favorite decor ever cost almost nothing: dollar-store finds, a can of spray paint, and the confidence to commit.

Apothecary jars

Goodwill jars + a crystal glued on top + a pedestal made from a clear plate flipped over a glass. Skip the 40-dollar glass jars. Thank you, next.

Sheet ghosts

White sheets hung from the ceiling with a fan underneath. Biggest impact per dollar in this entire playbook.

The entryway

Millions of spider webs (they cost nothing and go so far), hurricane candles you already own, rats with glowing red eyes. Guests should be wowed before the door fully opens.

The hallway

The most underused decor anchor in a house. Thrift a million cheap frames, spray paint them all, hang floor-to-ceiling. Dark lights, throw blankets, done.

The candy rule

The candy has to match your color story. Clashing candy does not make the table.

ONE DRINK WITH A MOMENT

The bar

One signature drink. That is it. That is the whole bar strategy. Make the mocktail just as special as the cocktail.

Pick one signature cocktail. Then: beer, wine, soft drinks, bottled water. Done. One great specialty cocktail means you don't have to stock a whole bar.

The Vampire



Raspberry blood: puree 2 cups raspberries with 1/4 cup sugar, strain the seeds, simmer 10 minutes until dark and thick, then chill. Shake 4 oz vodka + 2 oz amaretto hard with ice; stir in 2 oz orange juice and 6 oz club soda, pour over ice. Fill syringes with the chilled puree and stand them in the glasses. Served in a syringe, obviously — guests squeeze their own blood in. Makes 4.

Adapted from Krissy Allori of Self Proclaimed Foodie — @krissy_selfproclaimedfoodie

Hocus Pocus Fizz

1 cup pineapple juice · 1/2 cup white rum · 1/4 tsp McCormick coconut extract · 3 drops McCormick red food color · 2 drops McCormick yellow food color · 1 bottle (750ml) sparkling white wine

Stir the juice, rum, extract and colors together in a pitcher; chill. Per glass: 2 oz of the mix, topped with 4 oz sparkling wine. Serves 6 — big-batch friendly, dangerously pretty.

Mocktail it: skip the rum, bump the pineapple juice to 1 1/2 cups, and use sparkling white grape juice instead of the wine.

Recipe adapted from McCormick — mccormick.com

FEED THEM, DO NOT SEAT THEM

The food rules



Snacks. Heavy hors d'oeuvres. Carbs. Nobody came for a seated dinner — unless it is the seance, obviously.

Anything served IN a pumpkin is automatically amazing.

Bake brie and cranberries inside a hollowed pumpkin. I could smell it through my phone.

Chili in individual Fritos bags, sliced open.

Perfect Halloween food. Zero plates, zero regrets.

Candy corn jello shots.

The adult version of the most Halloween candy ever. Make a double batch.

Match the sweets to the color story.

Desserts are decor. If it clashes with the palette, it does not make the table.

Baked Brie in a Pumpkin

Bake brie and cranberries inside a hollowed pumpkin. I could smell it through my phone.

1 small pumpkin (2-3 lbs) — hollow, rub with olive oil, bake at 400F for 20 minutes, pat dry. Nestle in 1 brie wheel + a handful of cranberries. Bake covered 10 minutes, uncovered 15 more until molten. Serve with crackers and watch it vanish.

Questions? DM me @thepartygoddess — I'm right here.

THE THING THEY WILL TALK ABOUT

The wow moment

Every party needs ONE wow moment, about two-thirds of the way in — before people start leaving. Someone coming out of the table. A cloche reveal with dry ice rolling out across the table. That is the beat they will describe to everyone on Monday.

Dry ice safety, because I love you: it will burn you. Do not put chunks in drinks. Consult an actual adult.

Games for grown-ups

Tarot, Halloween bingo, trivia — but read your crowd. Honestly, if you have readers and interactive stations, you do not need "games." The stations ARE the entertainment.

Costumes: yes, require them

It is not rude — it is your party. But keep backup: spider-glued sunglasses, boas, a makeup station. The uncostumed will thank you, and your photos will thank you more.

HOST LIKE YOU MEAN IT

Getting them in, getting them out

How do I get people to leave?

My specialty: cut the bar, turn up the lights, make the temperature uncomfortable. Done. No awkwardness required — the room tells them.

It is three days out and I have nothing planned

Do not panic. Shrink the list. Pick the ONE part you actually feel like doing — cooking? just having friends over? — PLUS decor. No matter what, you gotta have Halloween decor. Let the rest go. Maybe it is a brunch, not a party. Your garage is a decor store you forgot you owned.

Keep it elegant, not cheesy

Dumb down the color story: black, white, metallics. No plastic orange pumpkins — or spray paint them. Low lights, edited like a holiday dinner party. Just darker. No kitsch — unless you're doing kitsch. Then really DO kitsch.

And remember: there will always be disasters. Mine? A guest once ate pavement on an unlit driveway step. So when I say keep it dark, I mean atmospherically dark. Light the trip hazards, people.

THE RESOURCE STASH

Steal these links

Everything in this guide came from somewhere. Steal away — that is what they are for.

FROM THE GODDESS

@thepartygoddess on Instagram — Your daily dose of chaos, parties, and me.

<https://www.instagram.com/thepartygoddess>

Ep 101: "Wicked Wednesday" — The Halloween episode this guide was born from.

Listen while you decorate.

<https://podcast.theprofitgoddess.com/101>

The Party Goddess! on YouTube — Watch me actually build this stuff, KCBS segment included.

<https://www.youtube.com/@ThePartyGoddess>

My Halloween Pinterest board — Hundreds of pinned ideas. Go get lost in there.

<https://www.pinterest.com/thepartygoddess/halloween/>

FROM THE BLOG VAULT

Scary Good Halloween Tips I Shared On KCBS TV! — The TV segment behind the jeweled pumpkin.

<https://thepartygoddess.com/scary-good-halloween-tips-shared-kcbs-tv/>

Cheers For Fears! Best Halloween Cocktails! — More drinks with moments.

<https://thepartygoddess.com/cheers-fears-best-halloween-cocktails/>

I Could Totally Do That! Best Halloween Hacks! — Shortcuts that look like sorcery.

<https://thepartygoddess.com/best-halloween-hacks/>

6 Totally Killer Halloween Party Decorations! — The decor playbook, expanded.

<https://thepartygoddess.com/6-totally-killer-halloween-party-decorations/>

5 Totally Last-Minute DIY Halloween Costumes! — For the guests who "forgot."

<https://thepartygoddess.com/5-totally-last-minute-diy-halloween-costumes/>

FROM FRIENDS OF THE GUIDE

Krissy Allori — Self Proclaimed Foodie — The genius behind The Vampire. Tell her I sent you.

<https://selfproclaimedfoodie.com>

Krissy's Vampire Cocktail recipe — The original. Go make it.

<https://selfproclaimedfoodie.com/vampire-cocktail/>

McCormick's Hocus Pocus Fizz — The Fizz, straight from the spice gods.

<https://www.mccormick.com/blogs/recipes/hocus-pocus-fizz>

TEAR THIS PAGE OUT (MENTALLY)

The shopping list

Dollar-store glass bottles + jars (apothecary everything)
Spray paint: gold, bronze, silver, black
Stubby candles, tea lights, hurricane candles you own
Battery-operated lights + dimmers
Plastic syringes + IV-bag pouches (the bar)
Raspberry puree, cranberry juice, vodka/gin, pineapple juice
Smoke machine + DOUBLE the fuel you think you need
Dry ice (one cloche reveal — handle with respect)
Spider webs, plastic rats, red-eyed anything
White sheets (ghosts) + a fan
Candy that matches your color story. Non-negotiable.

Now go light the bad candles.
You know the ones.

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