



PRESS RELEASE



EMERALD ISLE SET TO TURN BLOOD RED FOR HALLOWEEN

Europe's largest Halloween street carnival takes place in Derry-Londonderry (29th- 31st October)

Celebrating the man behind the fangs, Bram Stoker Festival sets off the Dublin festival season with a scare (23rd- 26th October)

It's time to start buffing those broomsticks and clearing out the cobwebs as the island of Ireland prepares to host some of the most exciting and unusual events this Halloween, offering visitors a 'spook-tacular' way to experience Ireland and Northern Ireland's Halloween traditions.

The Origins of Halloween

Halloween originated in Ireland from the ancient Celtic festival of 'Samhain'. Samhain meaning 'end of summer' marked the end of harvest season and the beginning of winter or 'darker half' of the year in the 7th Century.

It was believed that on Samhain the veil between this world and the next was at its weakest, and the spirits of dead ancestors could pass through. During Samhain Irish people would wear costumes to disguise themselves and light bonfires as protection from evil spirits or fairies.

Today, the island of Ireland's darker side is celebrated countrywide in the lead up to Halloween, with adventures of the undead coming to life across Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Banks of the Foyle Carnival, Derry-Londonderry, 29th- 31st October

Derry-Londonderry has long held the accolade for hosting the largest Halloween Festival in Europe. Towns and cities across the island of Ireland celebrate Halloween, but none go to quite



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the same lengths as the old walled city on the banks of the River Foyle.

This year the theme is 'The Rise of the River Gods', drawing on the city's natural asset of the famed river, promising devilish activities for all to explore.

Over 40,000 visitors fill the city's streets, dark alleys and the famous Derry walls, with festivities peaking on Halloween night itself, with a Rise of the River Gods street carnival costume party and an unrivalled firework display.

Other highlights of the three-day event include the annual awakening of the walls, whereby a theatrical dreamworld comes care of theatre company LUXe, who use Derry's ancient city walls as their stage.

The Chateau Le Fear haunted house experience takes on an alien invasion scenario for 2015, and night and daytime Halloween markets and street artists will line Guildhall Square.

<http://www.visitderry.com/Halloween-Banks-of-the-Foyle-Carnival.T1234.aspx>

Bram Stoker Festival, Dublin, 23rd- 26th October

Whether you're a resident vampire or visiting from further afield, Bram Stoker Festival 2015 has something for everyone with its gothically inspired programme of events.

Dublin-born author Bram Stoker's renowned work, Dracula, is celebrated with an array of spooky events infiltrating every crevice of the city.

Unique spectacles include a Macnas street theatre procession, making its way through the city, along with vampire fugitives from across the world.

A major festival highlight sees world-renowned Irish street-artist Maser return to the cityscape of Dublin to create an interactive installation in Smithfield, which is inspired both by Stoker's life and the themes of his most famous work.

The deadliest adventure of all, New Blood, takes place at Projects Arts Centre on Sunday, 25th October. New Blood is a progressive Halloween Party for the Bram Stoker Festival filled with bespoke cocktails, art installations, live electronic acts and DJs. Attendees will lose themselves in a futuristic vampire haven and a feast of new blood.

Bram Stoker Festival will also collaborate with some of Ireland's leading designers and illustrators through a partnership with Damn Fine Print, who present two projects at the festival.

Dancing in The Moonlight: Dublin by Night is an exhibition and sale of the work of 15 specially commissioned artists including Chris Judge, Fuchsia Macree and Steve McCarthy

<http://www.bramstokerfestival.com>

Traditional Halloween Treats

Food also plays a large part in Samhain; the traditional delicacy eaten during Halloween is the famous Barm Brack, a fruit studded bread. The bread was cooked with various items inside. If you found a ring, it signified you would find true love and marry, a thimble meant you would never find love, a rag predicted poverty while a coin meant you would be wealthy.

It is believed that the practice of carving pumpkins originated in Ireland in the 19th Century. Halloween goes in parts of Ireland carved lanterns made from turnips and mangelwurzels. They were often carved with grotesque faces to represent spirits or goblins.

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