

Ireland: Halloween

People in Ireland have dressed in scary costumes for thousands of years. Today the Irish celebrate Halloween as Americans do. Stores sell Halloween costumes, decorations, and treats. Before Halloween, families listen to scary stories. People put on costumes on Halloween. They go trick or treating.

After trick or treating, they light big fires or go to parties. They eat *barmbrack* (BARM-brack), a special Halloween fruitcake. Baked inside the barmbrack are small items that tell fortunes. A ring means the person will be getting married soon. The Irish used to carve turnips. Now they carve pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns.



Mexico: *Día de los Muertos*

Bright yellow flowers are everywhere on the *Día de los Muertos* (DEE-ah day lohs MWAIR-tohs) in Mexico. This is the Day of the Dead. Mexicans celebrate every year from October 31 to November 2. This is a Christian holiday. But native Mexican **traditions** are still part of the celebration. These are hundreds of years old.

People call the marigold the flower of the dead. Its petals spread out like rays of the sun. Family members lay down paths of marigolds to guide the spirits home.

Marketplaces are busy. People buy colorful sugar skulls. Bakers sell *pan de muerto* (pahn day MWAIR-toh), the traditional bread of the dead. Skeleton statues called *calaveras* (kah-lah-veh-rahs) make people smile. These skeletons are dressed up like the living. They show the hobbies and jobs of lost loved ones. One calavera plays the drums. Another drives a truck. Yet another sells ice cream.