



Why Americans Shell Out Billions for Halloween Thrills

Description

Why do Americans spend over \$12 billion on Halloween? A psychologist sheds light on the allure of frightening ourselves for fun.

Gone are the times when children and their parents crafted DIY Halloween costumes from cardboard and bedsheets. According to the National Retail Federation, Americans splurged an astonishing \$12.2 billion on Halloween last year. A recent survey by Lending Tree reveals that nearly half of us are gearing up to indulge again this spooky season.

This presents a lucrative opportunity for small-business owners. If you're interested, the *Wall Street Journal* features an intriguing article detailing the secrets of success in the competitive \$500 million haunted house industry.

But the question remains: why do we willingly pay to experience that rush of terror? In our everyday lives, we go to great lengths to evade fear, especially given the many real-life horrors we face today.

To understand this phenomenon, we should consult psychologists. A recent post by Sarah Kollat, a Penn State psychology professor, delves into why we find value in scaring ourselves ridiculous on Halloween.

Halloween as an Adrenaline High

One straightforward reason for our fascination with Halloween fright is that many of us are, to some extent, adrenaline seekers. The thrilling rush that fear triggers is addictive, and visiting a haunted attraction offers a safe way to experience this excitement compared to more extreme activities, like skydiving.

Halloween as a Bonding Experience

Moreover, Halloween fosters social bonds. Sharing intense experiences, like visiting a haunted house, can strengthen friendships. Psychologists assert that moments of shared fear can solidify relationships, similar to the camaraderie formed among soldiers or survivors of disasters.

In essence, deep-rooted psychological factors drive Americans to invest significantly in Halloween festivities. The thrill of scare is not merely entertaining; it also offers a unique way to cope with the stresses of real life.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Allure** /ə'ljʊr/ (noun): The quality of being powerfully and mysteriously attractive.
2. **Indulge** /ɪn'dʌldʒ/ (verb): To allow oneself to enjoy the pleasure of something.



3. **Lucrative** /'lu:krətɪv/ (adjective): Producing a great deal of profit.
4. **Phenomenon** /fə'nɑ:.mə.nɑ:n/ (noun): An extraordinary event or circumstance.
5. **Camaraderie** /,kæmə'rɑ:dəri/ (noun): Mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together.
6. **Adrenaline** /ə'drɛnəlɪn/ (noun): A hormone released in response to stress excitement or danger increasing heart rate and energy.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. Why do Americans spend over \$12 billion on Halloween?
Option: To impress their friends
Option: To scare themselves for fun
Option: To support small businesses
Option: To avoid fear in real life
2. What is one reason for the fascination with Halloween fright mentioned in the text?
Option: To make DIY costumes
Option: To engage in extreme sports
Option: To experience an adrenaline rush
Option: To learn about psychology
3. According to psychologists, how can Halloween foster social bonds?
Option: By competing in haunted house contests
Option: By sharing intense experiences
Option: By avoiding fear altogether
Option: By celebrating alone
4. What does the text suggest about the allure of frightening oneself on Halloween?
Option: It is equivalent to facing real-life horrors
Option: It offers a unique coping mechanism
Option: It has no psychological benefits
Option: It is just for entertainment
5. How does the text describe the thrill of scare during Halloween?
Option: As a boring experience



- Option: As an extreme sport
- Option: As a way to cope with real-life stresses
- Option: As an entertaining and addictive rush

6. What is one possible reason given in the text for Americans indulging in Halloween festivities?

- Option: To support small-business owners
- Option: To fight real-life horrors
- Option: To avoid adrenaline rushes
- Option: To spend time with family

True-False

- 7. Americans used to primarily make DIY costumes for Halloween before spending billions on it.
- 8. Visiting a haunted attraction is considered a safe way to experience an adrenaline rush.
- 9. Psychologists believe that moments of shared fear can weaken relationships.
- 10. The text suggests that Halloween is solely about impressing others.
- 11. The allure of frightening oneself on Halloween is portrayed as having no psychological benefits.
- 12. According to the text, Halloween provides a way to cope with real-life stresses.

Gap-Fill

- 13. Americans spent an astonishing \$12.2 billion on Halloween last year, showcasing a lucrative opportunity for _____ owners.
- 14. Psychologists believe that shared fear can solidify relationships, similar to the camaraderie among soldiers or survivors of _____.
- 15. The text mentions that Halloween allows us to experience a thrilling rush that fear triggers in a _____ way compared to extreme activities like skydiving.
- 16. Many Americans are described as adrenaline seekers, finding the excitement of the Halloween scare to



be _____ and addictive.

17. According to the text, Halloween offers a unique way to cope with the stresses of

_____.

18. Americans are gearing up to indulge in Halloween again this season, as revealed by a recent survey

conducted by _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. To scare themselves for fun 2. To experience an adrenaline rush 3. By sharing intense experiences 4. It offers a unique coping mechanism 5. As an entertaining and addictive rush 6. To fight real-life horrors

True-False: 7. True 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. small-business 14. disasters 15. safe 16. thrilling 17. real life 18. Lending Tree

CATEGORY

1. Business - LEVEL4

Date Created

2024/10/25

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