31st Oct

Halloween Virtual Adventure

Get ready for a spook-tacular night...

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Your Virtual Adventure starts here...

Hi, come in, come in...

Welcome to the Virtual Adventure! I am so pleased you can join me and the other virtual travellers from around the world. Whether you've never been on a virtual adventure before or you're a seasoned virtual traveller, you are in for a lot of fun.

It can feel a little surreal at times; but just go with it. If you relax and let yourself be whisked away on the journey, then you're going to have a great time and make lots of special memories.

Coming up with the idea...

My very first virtual experience was a party for my 19th birthday. I was bedbound and feeling really low and lonely. I sent out little chocolate teacakes and candles for my friends to light and sing Happy Birthday! I felt surrounded by them, even though they were miles away. It turned what could have been an awful day into one I really enjoyed.

From there I went on to creating Holidays From Home and then Live in Love in Laugh in. The parties have grown so much over the past ten years and now are all singing and dancing - okay more like audio and cool e-magazine; but they have become what I first imagined. I'm so pleased I get to share them with you now.

I've had so much fun with the virtual adventures, parties and vacations, trying new things, seeing new sights and meeting lots of amazing people. I love having something to look forward to, especially when I feel so left out hearing what other people are up to.

I have my own social life for the first time in years and that is so amazing - and exciting!

Okay so let's get down to the juicy details, how does this Virtual Adventure thing work?

Where to start?

First step is to download the complete experience. There's an e-magazine and an mp3 audio.

Can't spend much time on a computer? Me either, so just download them to your electronic device of choice: laptop, smart phone or notebook. Then you can print them off, load them onto your mp3 player, or just browse as and when you are able.

Audio or Magazine?

The mp3 has the virtual experience, recorded in my own dulcet (kind of) tones. You can listen to it while relaxing, either with your eyes shut, to help you imagine it or while looking through the magazine where you'll find accompanying photos. If you find visualising a challenge then this makes it much easier.

The magazine also has the written version along with the photos, as well as the recipes and activities you can do to help bring your virtual adventure to life.

You can do as much or as little as you are able: feel free to customise it to your own needs. Do the things you like the sound of and adapt them to your abilities. You don't have to fit it all into a single day, you can spread it out over days or weeks.

Share your adventures and make new friends...

We have a virtual hang out for all the virtual travellers. You can find us on Facebook Pop in and say hi. https://www.facebook.com/groups/liveinloveinlaughin

Introduce yourself, jump into conversations, add comments, share any fun ideas you have had for your virtual adventure that others might enjoy too. Don't feel nervous or shy, it's natural, I get like that too; but everyone is warm and friendly. We are all here to have a fab time and sharing the party with others is a huge part of that!

You can also Tweet, Facebook or Instagram your experiences with #virtualadventure

If you do, you'll get a 20% discount code off your next virtual adventure, because there's just so many to choose from, who wants to do just one?

Let me know how you're getting on by tagging @clairerwade

Remember...

This is your party - it's all about you having a great time, so do what feels good, adapt it to suit your needs and abilities and most importantly....

Have fun!

Claire x.

Pumpkin Picking

Halloween wouldn't be complete without a pumpkin, for carving and eating. Most people get their's from the supermarket; but you're going to head out to a farm to pick your own.

Today you are going to go and pick your own pumpkin. You feel a rush of excitement knowing that you'll be able to choose your own perfect one. The thought of all the things you can do with it, once you get it home is equally exciting – carving, cooking and eating!

You can't wait; but first you have to choose one. The pumpkins are growing at a local farm and you have to walk through the orchards to reach the field. It's a cool, clear day, with a beautiful blue sky, across which strands of candy floss clouds and vapour trails make a stunning pattern. The sun is out; but the strong breeze means you're glad to be wrapped up in a warm coat.

As you walk along, there are apple and pear trees growing on each side of you. Even from a distance you can see that the trees are heavily laden with fruit. Some of the branches are bending under the weight of the huge shiny apples and juicy looking pears. You feel an overwhelming urge to go across and pick a few; but you have to save that for another day, when there will be time to wonder the orchard and take your spoils home to make a delicious apple pie. You ignore your watering mouth and rumbling stomach, concentrating on walking over the rough grass.

You glance around you, unsure what it is you're looking for. You have a vague idea that pumpkins are grown in patches, that's where the stork leaves babies right? Oh no, you realise that's cabbages.

You scan the area looking for signs of your quest; but there's nothing. Did you come the right way? You start to wonder about turning back, trying a different route; but then you glance to your right and you can just make out some orange dots.

A fizz of excitement begins to build as you sense how close to your destination you are. You start to walk towards the field and as you get closer you see a long stretch of green, with randomly placed spheres, it looks as if a basketball team got bored and left all their bright orange balls out on the field.

This is definitely it and you can't wait to choose one to take home. At first it looks as if the pumpkins have already been cut and left out for people, you feel a little cheated, you'd come to pick your own; but then you notice the dried up grey vines and leaves which crunch as you walk over them. The pumpkins have been growing on vines; but the vines have died away to leave the fruit behind. Some of them though are still attached by green stems and despite feeling a bit contrary you decide you want one like that, so you can officially "pick" your own pumpkin.

The question is, which pumpkin do you choose – there are so many shapes and sizes, none are perfectly circular; but you like that, it feels like it adds character to each and every one. The temptation is to choose the largest, roundest, most orange pumpkin in the patch; but then you realise you'll have to carry it back with you. Maybe it would be better to pick a slightly smaller, more manageable one, especially if you intend to carve it. It's great to have a large canvas to work with; but you will have to scoop out all the seeds and flesh first. It sounds like a lot of effort, so you decide to go with a medium sized pumpkin. You walk among the pumpkins, searching for the right one. It needs to have a flat base to rest on and preferably not have any blemishes to mar your work of art.

As you move down the field you notice one solo pumpkin on the grass path, for a second you feel a slight chill – it's like the pumpkin is marching towards civilisation, visions of it rolling around on its own cause a definite shudder to run up your spine – that's just the story of a bad Halloween film right?

With great effort you turn your back on the marching pumpkin and return to your search. The crisp crunch of the dried leaves makes you look down and you see that there are small green stinging nettles growing alongside the pumpkins. You check to make sure your trouser legs are pulled down and feel pleased you went with heavy duty shoes today.

Time is passing and you start to feel overwhelmed with choice, how can you just pick one? You wander a bit aimlessly through the patch until you suddenly spot one – aha, that's it! You're not sure why this is the one; but you just know it is!

Bending down you reach out to pick it, being careful to avoid the stinging nettles. You pull on the green stem and let out a sudden gasp! Looking down you see that the stem is covered in tiny little prickles. You inspect your thumb for any sign of splinters; but finding none, give it a quick rub, deciding to be more careful the next time you touch the pumpkin.

You think about changing pumpkins; but have your heart set on this one, so you very carefully pick it up, supporting the weight with your other hand, so that you don't get prickled again.

The side of the pumpkin is a bit dirty from where it's been lying on the ground. You don't get that in the supermarkets; but you also don't get the beautiful walk in the countryside.

The pumpkin skin feels cool and smooth against your hands. It's solid and not too heavy; but walking back, the closer you get to the farm shop, the happier you are to think about putting it down. Walking into the shop you pay your pound for your pumpkin and then you're ready to take it home. You can't wait to start getting ready for the Halloween party

Shopping List

Some items you will need to help your party go with a swing. Items are optional, feel free to customise to your own needs.

1 pumpkin for carving
1 bag of apples and a washing up bowl or bucket, for bobbing
1 costume – see costume ideas

Halloween Party Menu Ingredients

Cauldron Soup - serves 4
450g (1 lb) pumpkin, peeled and seeded
60g (2 oz) margarine or butter
340g (¾ lb) potatoes, peeled and sliced
1 tin (14oz) tomatoes
1.15 litres (2 pints) vegetable stock
To Serve: 2 tbsp single cream
Parsley, chopped

Mummy Bites – serves 4
12 hot dogs or 8 sausages, (meat or vegetarian)
1 pack croissant pastry, or ready roll puff or shortcrust
Yellow mustard or ketchup

Dragon Claws with Congealed blood dip
1 Baking potato per person
Tomato ketchup or tomato salsa

Witches Fingers – makes 12
50g butter – softened
100g caster sugar
1 medium egg yolk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract/essence
½ tablespoon milk
Green food colouring (optional)
150g plain flour or gluten free flour (1/2 gluten free ½ rice flour works best)
50g porridge oats
50g ground almonds
Cashew nuts or almonds

Pumpkin Jack Cake
½ cup cooked, mashed Pumpkin
120g (4 oz) margarine or butter
120g (4 oz) Caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
2 dessert spoons golden syrup
240g (8 oz) Self raising flour
1 teaspoon mixed spice
Pinch of salt
120g (4 oz) dried mixed fruit

Pumpkin Carving

Pumpkin carving may have originated during the Celtic festival Samhain; but it is still really popular today. It is said that leaving one in your window is a sign that Trick or Treaters are welcome, so you may want to keep yours inside if you don't want to be disturbed.

Take a look at all the different varieties of pumpkins, they come in all shapes, sizes and colours... www.livescience.com/12785-peculiar-halloween-pumpkins-image-gallery-halloween-pumpkins-gourds-jack-lanterns.html

Once you've got your pumpkin home, it's time to get to work and carve a spooky jack-o'-lantern to put outside your door to keep away the spirits! Or maybe just to provide some atmospheric lighting at your virtual party.

Have a look for some inspiration here - you can go classic triangle eyes, nose and mouth or maybe try something a bit more complicated and artistic! Some of the designs are breath-taking and really scary!

- *http://www.pumpkingutter.com/*
- *http://mashable.com/2011/10/26/tech-and-social-media-pumpkins/*

You can even download some paper patterns to mark out your design - there's free ones here as well as ones to buy. http://www.pumpkinlady.com/pumpkin-carving-patterns/free-pumpkin-carving-patterns/

How to Carve your Pumpkin

1. *Take your pumpkin and if it's still dirty wash it and dry it thoroughly.*
2. *Place the pumpkin on a flat surface, possibly resting on a tea-towel or non-slip cloth. Find the place where the pumpkin will sit without moving and wobbling.*
3. *First draw where you want your lid - a rough hexagon (6 sides) around the stalk is best. Use a felt pen to mark where you will cut.*
4. *Now it's time to take a knife to your poor pumpkin; but please be careful! Get someone to help or even do it for you. You can get pumpkin carving kits with short, easy to use tools. http://www.escapade.co.uk/halloween-accessories-sale/pumpkin-carving-kit-.asp Alternatively use a kitchen knife, a small Kitchen Devil / Vegetable Paring knife seems to work best.*
5. *Slowly and carefully cut into the pumpkin, straight lines are easiest to follow. Make sure you join up all the lines so that once you get back to the start of the lid, you can lift it out. Set it to one side, you'll need it later.*
6. *Scoop out all the seeds from the centre of the pumpkin; but don't throw away - see the Witches Nails recipe.*
7. *Mark on the design with a felt pen or use Sellotape to stick the template to the side.*
8. *Carefully cut the design out, make sure you leave space around each hole, so that you don't join up your holes and cause the design to collapse. If this happens you can alter your design - remember nobody else knows what you want it to look like.*
9. *Leave the lid off and allow the pumpkin to dry slightly inside. Then add a tea light or battery powered candle.*
10. *Keep your pumpkin somewhere cool to make it last as long as possible.*
11. *If putting a candle inside make sure you stand it on a heat resistant surface and don't have anything above it as the heat coming off the candle can get very hot. Never leave unattended.*

Have fun and remember please be very, very careful! If you have problems with dexterity then I strongly recommend getting someone to do this for you. Children must be supervised.

For more help take a look at this great photo guide. http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/gallery/2011/oct/27/how-to-carve-pumpkin-halloween#/?picture=381037202&index=0

Trick or Treating

You've spent the afternoon getting ready and whatever your choice of costume, you now feel suitably prepared to head out into the rapidly darkening night. As you leave your house you pick up a plastic orange bucket, shaped like a pumpkin, ready to carry home the spoils of your trick or treating.

You walk out of your front door and head down the road; but as you look around, you realise that something has happened; you've been transported to a street you don't recognise. It's all part of the Halloween magic.

The street is full of people, both adults and children, dressed in weird and wonderful costumes. You spot lots of witches and wizards, wands held aloft, a few vampires complete with bloody mouths and some magical looking fairies with sparkly wings. You also notice lots of people that look like characters from some of your favourite films, they all look very convincing, especially Captain Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean, who comes sauntering past you. Two people are completely covered in blue body paint inspired by Avatar, a group of friends have come as Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion from The Wizard of Oz, they've got talking to someone dressed as the Wicked Witch; but she looks young and pretty and you think it might be more inspired by the musical Wicked. The scariest of all is the person dressed up as the Joker! You want to keep away from him!

Everybody seems to be making their way up to each house which has a pumpkin outside; the universal sign for Trick or treaters are welcome. You decide to join in the fun.

The first house has light blazing from every window and you make your way up the path, bucket swinging by your side. There's a large brass knocker on the front door and you raise it, letting it fall back with a loud bang which reverberates through the house. You wait with a sense of anticipation as footsteps approach the door and it opens to reveal two young women, one in rags with a dustpan and brush and the other in a beautiful ball gown and tiara.

"Trick or Treat," you chorus and with a giggle the women pick up a handful of sweets from a bowl beside them and drop it into your bucket.

"Thank you!" You say glancing into the bucket to see all the sparkly wrappers of the chocolates, already eyeing up which are your favourites. "You two look amazing, what are you dressed as?" you ask.

"We're Cinderella, before and after!" The two women giggle. With that you're surrounded by a pack of children coming for goodies, so you retreat back down the path.

The next house has gone to town, with decorations all over the garden and house, spooky lights in the window and carved pumpkins leading up the path. Moving past the lanterns, you see outside the front door is a spooky looking ghost blowing in the breeze.

You go to press the bell you suddenly hear "Ah, ha, ha, ha!"

You jump at the loud cackle! You can feel your heart pounding in your chest from the sudden scare and glance around; you spot a plastic witch beside you. It must be motion sensitive and went off as you passed it! Smiling at the fun trick the owners played, you press the bell and wait. The door opens to reveal Count Dracula waiting for you, fangs dripping with blood. "Velcome to my crypt!"

He seems to be eyeing your neck up so you quickly take a handful of sweets and rapidly make your way back to the street.

The next house is dark and shadowy. The light from the moon illuminates the broken gate and weed covered path. You swallow hard, maybe now's a good time to head home you think; but the night's still young and you refuse to give up. There are lots of people in the street, how bad can it be, right?

The gate groans as you open it and you can hear the crunch of the gravel beneath your feet as you walk up the path. You stop outside the door and look at it nervously. Is this really a good idea?

Unsure of whether to ring the bell, the door suddenly opens all of its own, letting out an eerie creaking sound. You swallow and look through the entrance into the dark passage beyond. You can just make out the faint glow of a distant candle; but not much else.

You pause, wanting to turn back; but something draws you on. You take a step over the threshold and then another. Behind you the door creaks closed and you glance behind you, tempted to run; but you find yourself taking a third step into the dim corridor.

A little voice inside you tells you that you're crazy, that this is the start of every horror film ever made; but you keep walking. The floor boards creak beneath you and a cold breeze fills the corridor, making you shiver.

The little light ahead of you seems to be getting further away and you pick up your pace to keep up with it. A distant beating noise comes to you and you're not sure if it's the blood pounding in your ears or something more sinister.

Your eyes have adjusted to the gloom and you make out that there are large dusty cobwebs hanging down on either side of you, the thought of the spiders that made the webs makes you move even faster and up ahead of you there's a large door with the number 13 painted in bright red paint on it – or at least you hope it's paint!

What should you do? Open the door or turn back? ....

You think you hear voices on the other side of the door and screwing up your courage you place your hand on the door knob and turn. The door opens and you're almost blinded by the light and colour!

You're surrounded by voices and laughter and you look around to see you've reached the party! You'll be spending the night here, celebrating with all the other virtual Halloween party-goers! You let out a laugh of relief as they welcome you in. Everybody is dressed up and you take the time to look at all the amazing costumes.

Somebody hands you a glass of your favourite drink and you listen to the music which is playing in the background, realising it's the source of the pounding beat you heard earlier!

There's a table laid for dinner and you can't wait to tuck in to all the Halloween themed dishes. In one corner of the room somebody is bobbing for apples in a large bucket of water. The people watching are all dripping wet and you guess they must have already had a go.

In another corner, there are apples hanging from the ceiling, tied to long strings. A clown has his hands behind his back and is desperately trying to catch one of the apples using just his mouth. You laugh as he lunges forward it and it swings out of his grasp, coming back to hit him on his big red nose! Fortunately the fancy dress nose stops him getting hurt; but it does let out a loud honk!

A vampire with sharp looking fangs steps forward to take his place – he looks like he's better equipped!

Now it's time for you to wander around the room, take the time to introduce yourself to everyone, you might spot some familiar faces beneath the costumes. Have fun and enjoy all the virtual celebrations!

Have a great night!

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History of Halloween

Before you get down to some virtual partying, you should really know why people celebrate Halloween and some of the popular customs which are still part of the modern day celebrations.

The Origins of Halloween

Halloween is always celebrated on 31st October and it is a combination of traditions from different festivals. It dates back over 2000 years, making it one of the oldest celebrations in the world. It has links to many ancient celebrations including:-

- *The Roman Feralia festival, commemorating the dead*
- *The Roman Pomona festival, honouring the goddess of fruit & trees*
- *The Celtic festival Samhain or Samuin, which means "summer's end". It marked the end of the season of the sun and the beginning of the season of darkness, which was the start of their New Year on 1st November. The Romans combined their two festivals with Samhain when they conquered Britain. This is the festival most resembling Halloween and is generally considered to be the origin of Halloween itself.*
- *The Catholic Hallowmas period of "All Souls' Day" & "All Saints' Day", which was instigated around 800 AD by the church in an attempt to replace Samhain. The word Halloween originally came from the Middle English "Alholowmesse", which means "All Saint's Day". The night before Alholowmesse was called "All Hallows Even (evening)" which was eventually shortened and became "Hallowe'en" and it became "Halloween" in the 20th century.*
- *In Mexico, they celebrate El Dia de los Muertos or the Day of the Dead starting the evening of October 31.*
- *'Nos Calan Gaeaf' is Welsh for Samhain.*

Trick or Treating

Trick or treating originated in Britain and Ireland, during the Middle Ages. It resembles the practice of "souling". Poor people would go door to door on Hallowmas asking for food in return for prayers for the dead on 'all souls day'. They were given special treats called soulcakes.

The custom of wearing costumes or masks comes from the Celtic tradition where boys would impersonate evil spirits by dressing up in white costumes with blackened faces or masks in order to try to placate these spirits.

Pumpkin Carving

Pumpkin carving is a custom originating from the Celtic festival Samhain. They would hollow out turnips and, carve faces in them and then place candles inside. The turnips were then placed in the windows to prevent evil spirits from entering the home or they would be carried around as lanterns. This tradition merged with the North American tradition of carving pumpkins.

The biggest pumpkin in the world tipped the scales at a whopping 1,446 pounds. This gigantic gourd was weighed in October 2004 at a pumpkin festival in Port Elgin, Ontario, Canada.

The record for the fastest pumpkin carver in the world is Jerry Ayers of Baltimore, Ohio. He carved a pumpkin in just 37 seconds!

Apple Bobbing

Bobbing for apples at Halloween has been a tradition for at least two hundred years, it was mentioned in the book Curiosities of Superstition by British author W. H. Davenport Adams in 1902.

"***[The apples] are thrown into a tub of water, and you endeavour to catch one in your mouth as they bob round and round in provoking fashion. When you have caught one, you peel it carefully, and pass the long strip of peel thrice, sunwise, round your head; after which you throw it over your shoulder, and it falls to the ground in the shape of the initial letter of your true love's name."***

Have a go at bobbing for your own apple - fill a bowl with water and then place several apples in it - make sure there are towels at hand as this can get rather wet. Now without using your hands try to catch an apple in your mouth and lift it out of the water - Tip: A shallow bowl, not too full makes it easier!

Alternatively you can try Snap Apple. Tie an apple to a piece of string, by knotting it around the stem. Hang up the apple and then try to catch it, again without your hands - be careful not to give yourself a black eye!

When you've caught your apple, carefully peel it into one long strip and then throw it over your shoulder to reveal your true love's initial.

Halloween Costumes

Halloween wouldn't be complete without a spooky costume. It's the one day of the year when a grown adult can dress up in a costume and people don't consider them complete lunatics, well maybe just a little bit.

It's time to embrace your inner ghost, ghoul, vampire or witch and enjoy a day of pretending to be someone else. Costumes don't need to be complicated or expensive – have a go at one of these.

Upload your pictures here https://www.facebook.com/groups/liveinloveinlaughin/
Be brave, everybody looks a bit silly on Halloween.

Zombie *– most of us can pull this off with our pale complexion, dark circles and blood shot eyes. For added eeew factor, use white face/body powder or talcum powder to make you even paler. Add some fake blood using face paint, tomato ketchup or food colouring.*

Ghost *– the easiest of all – grab a white sheet and put it over you. If it's an old one cut some eye holes, if not just drape it round you, leaving room to breathe and see.*

Witch or Wizard *– all the supermarkets are doing very cheap Halloween costumes this year, so pick up a black hat, or make one out of a rolled cone of black paper . Then grab a broom and it's even better if you happen to own a cat (preferably a black one). If you want to go for the Harry Potter look draw a red lightning bolt on with a lip liner pencil.*

Vampire *– channelling the spirit of Twilight, or more traditionally Buffy the Vampire Slayer or Blade, pop in a pair of plastic fangs and you could even splash on some fake blood. This is one of the easiest costumes to do.*

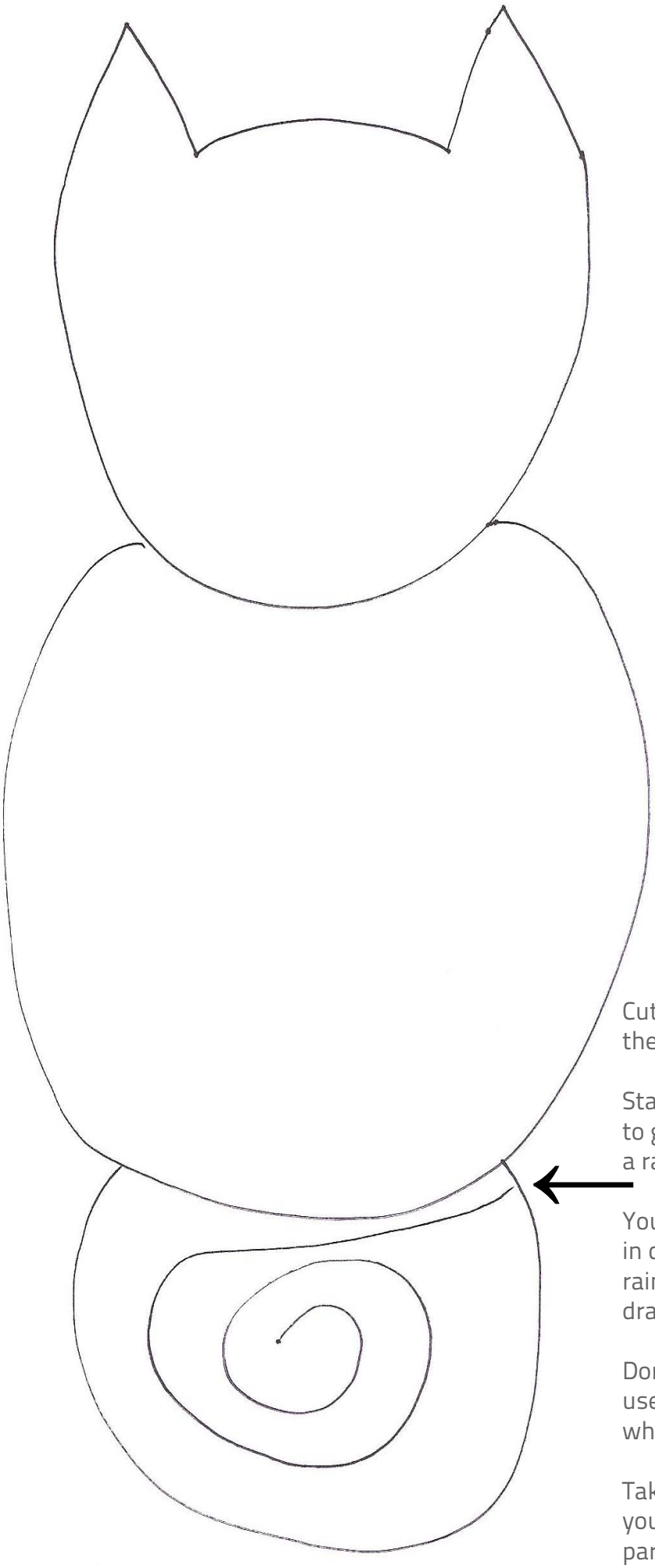
If you want some more very cool ideas check out
http://costumeideazone.com/

Halloween Movies Boo!

Halloween is a classic time to watch some scary movies; but if you're like me and are more into Casper the Friendly Ghost than Dracula, then check out these films set on Halloween, with a Boo scale from 1 - 5!

- *Arsenic and Old Lace* ***Boo x 1***
- *Penelope* ***Boo x 1***
- *Pooh's Heffalump Halloween Movie* ***Boo x 1***
- *ET - The Extra-Terrestrial* ***Boo x 1***
- *Mean Girls* ***Boo x 1***
- *Monster House* ***Boo x 2***
- *Hocus Pocus* ***Boo x 2***
- *Donnie Darko* ***Boo x 3***
- *Sleepy Hollow* ***Boo x 4***
- *Lady In White* ***Boo x 4***
- *Trick 'r Treat* ***Boo x 5***
- *Ginger Snaps* ***Boo x 5***
- *Idle Hands* ***Boo x 5***
- *Halloween series* ***Boo x 5***

NB I have not watched the scary ones - these are suggestions from the web, don't blame me for any nightmares. I'll be sticking to Penelope!



Create a Cat!

Cut out the witches cat by following the lines.

Start here for the tail and work around, to get a cool, curly tail. Hang it up near a radiator or breeze and watch it move.

You could make a whole room of cats in different colours e.g. black or even rainbow papers. Use the template or draw your own for different sizes.

Don't forget to add a face, you could use googly eyes and nylon thread for whiskers.

Take a picture of your cat or scan it into your computer and share it with the party goers.

Halloween Menu

Cauldron Soup

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Mummy Bites
with Dragon Claws
& Congealed Blood

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Witch's Fingers
or Pumpkin Jack Cake

Cauldron Soup

Serves 4

- 450g (1 lb) pumpkin, peeled, seeded and diced into large cubes - don't throw the seeds away!
- 60g (2 oz) margarine or butter
- 340g (¾ lb) potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 tin (14oz) tomatoes
- 1.15 litres (2 pints) vegetable stock
- Seasoning

To Serve:
- 2 tbsp single cream
- Parsley, chopped

1. Melt the butter in a pan and cook the diced pumpkin gently for five minutes.
2. Add the potatoes and cook for a few more minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes, stock and seasoning. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for one hour, until the vegetables are cooked.
4. Liquidise the soup with a hand blender or food processor.
5. Serve with a swirl of cream and a sprinkle of chopped parsley.

Mummy Bites

Serves 4

- 12 hot dogs or 8 sausages, (meat or vegetarian, preferably thin sausages)
- 1 pack/tin croissant pastry, or ready roll puff or shortcrust
- Yellow mustard or ketchup

1. Preheat your oven to 190°C (375°F).
2. Roll out the pastry and press together any seams.
3. Cut into 2 cm wide strips – use a pizza cutter to get long straight strips.
4. Roll the pastry around the sausages, starting at the top, leaving a gap for the face and then cover the body.
5. If you're using large sausages you may want to partially cook the sausages, to stop the pastry overcooking. Be careful wrapping the hot sausages.
6. Brush with milk or beaten egg.
7. Place in the oven and cook until the sausages are hot and cooked, and the pastry is golden brown.
8. Use mustard or ketchup to add eyes, the easiest way is to dip a skewer or fork prong into a small bowl and place on the sausage.
9. Arrange on a plate and serve!

Dragon Claws

Per Person

- 1 Baking potato per person
- A little oil, your choice - a spray bottle works well
- Seasoning - salt & pepper, or cayenne pepper, or dried mixed herbs

1. Cut the baking potatoes in half lengthways, then cut each half into two or three 'claws'.
2. Oil a baking tray, spread out the potato slices in a single layer, brush or spray lightly with oil and sprinkle with seasoning. For an extra kick add cayenne pepper or for more milder claws use mixed herbs.
3. Bake in a moderate oven 180°C (350°F) for 30 minutes or until browned and soft in the middle.

Congealed blood dip

Use a bowl full of tomato ketchup or tomato salsa to serve with the claws.

Witches Fingernails

Use the left over pumpkin seeds to make this delicious nutritious snack.

1. Spread the seeds on a well oiled baking sheet, to form one even layer.
2. Sprinkle with a little salt and place in a hot oven, 200°C / Gas 7 for 10 minutes or until golden brown and crunchy.
3. Allow to cool and serve.

Witches Fingers

Makes 12

- 50g butter – softened
- 100g caster sugar
- 1 medium egg yolk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract/essence
- ½ tablespoon milk
- Green food colouring (optional)
- 150g plain flour or gluten free flour (1/2 gluten free ½ rice flour works best)
- 50g porridge oats
- 50g ground almonds
- Cashew nuts or almonds

1. Preheat the oven to 210°C / Gas6.
2. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar together until light, fluffy and a paler colour.
3. Beat in the egg yolk, followed by the vanilla and milk.
4. If using the food colouring, mix in well. Keep adding until you reach the required depth of colour.
5. Stir in the flour, oats and almonds, mix to form a dough. Add a little extra milk if it doesn't come together.
6. Divide the mixture into 12 portions and then roll to create fingers, sausage shapes.
7. Place on a greased tray.
8. Use a knife to score knuckles and add a cashew nut or almond as a fingernail. You can even add warts as sultanas or chocolate chips.
9. Bake for 12-14 minutes until light golden and firm to the touch.
10. Leave to cool and serve. You can use coloured icing to pain the nails if you like.

Pumpkin Jack Cake

- ½ cup cooked, mashed Pumpkin
- 120g (4 oz) margarine or butter
- 120g (4 oz) Caster sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 dessert spoons golden syrup
- 240g (8 oz) Self raising flour
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- Pinch of salt
- 120g (4 oz) dried mixed fruit

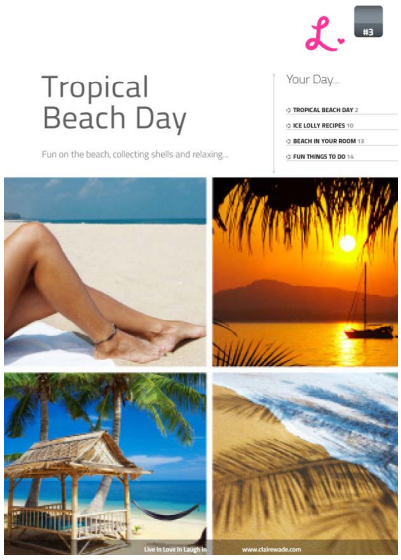
Mashed Pumpkin

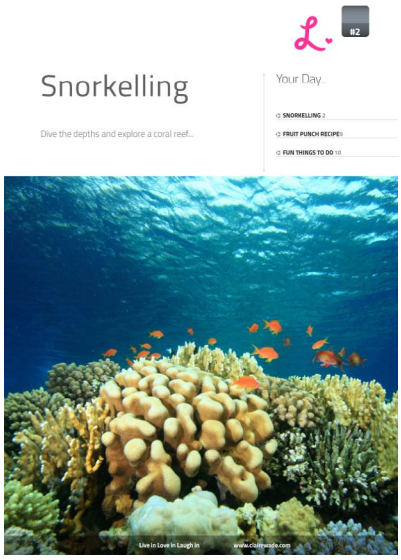
1. Cut up about 10-12 cubes of pumpkin about 2cm each.
2. Place in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer until tender – about 10 minutes.
3. Drain leave to cool and then mash.
4. Extra pumpkin can be used as a side dish. Place it in a baking dish, cover with bread crumbs, seasoning and Parmesan cheese. Bake in the oven at 180°C.

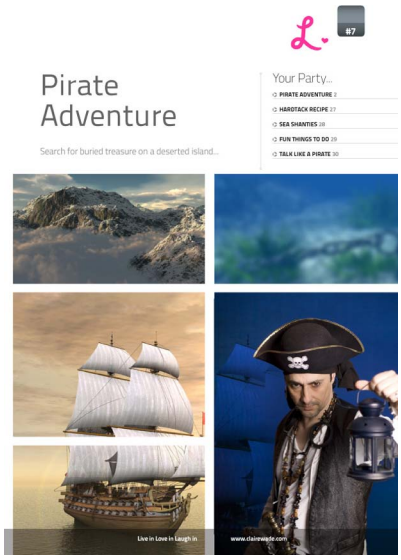
Cake

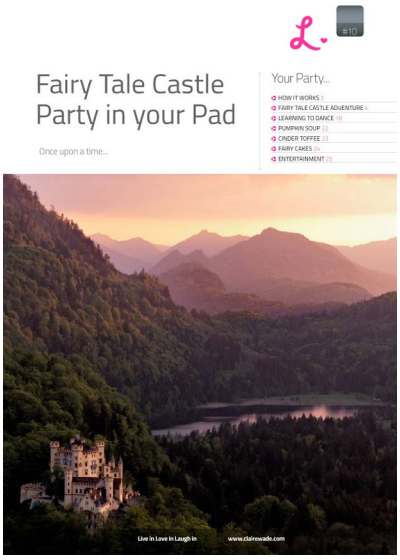
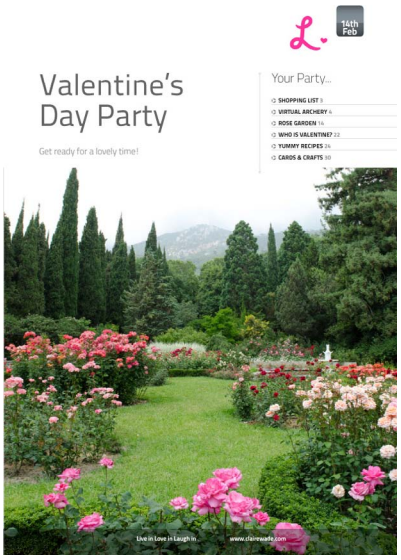
1. Beat the butter, sugar and syrup until smooth, light and fluffy. This is easiest done with a hand blender or food processor.
2. Gradually beat in the eggs, alternating with a tablespoon of the flour.
3. Fold in the remaining flour, spices, fruit and pumpkin.
4. Place in a greased, lined baking 8" tin.
5. Bake in the oven at 180°C for 1 hour until the cake is golden, firm and slightly springy, or a skewer comes out clean.

More fun awaits you with new adventures...





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