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Over a third of Americans believe in ghosts and U.F.O's

Decorating your house and carving pumpkins among the most popular ways to celebrate Halloween

Washington, DC, October 20, 2021 – A recent Ipsos poll finds that over a third of Americans believe in ghosts and U.F.O's. Men are more likely than women to believe in U.F.Os, while women are more likely to believe in ghosts. While over a third of Americans say they believe in ghosts, fewer have actually seen or believed to have been in the presence of a ghost. About two thirds of Americans celebrate Halloween, with women being more likely to celebrate than men. The most popular ways to celebrate include decorating your house, carving pumpkins, and watching scary movies.

Detailed Findings

1. Over a third of Americans believe in ghosts (36%) and U.F.O's (39%).
 - Belief in both ghosts and U.F.O's has increased slightly since October 2007, by two and five percentage points, respectively. Men are more likely than women to believe in U.F.Os (43% men, 35% women), while women are more likely to believe in ghosts (41% women, 32% men) and spells or witchcraft (26% women, 15% men).
 - While about one in three Americans believe in ghosts (36%), only about one in four have actually seen or believed to have been in the presence of a ghost (24%). Women are more likely than men to have seen or felt the presence of a ghost (28% women and 19% men)
 - Although about two in five Americans believe in U.F.Os, only ten percent claim to have seen one.
2. About two thirds of Americans celebrate Halloween (62%), with women being more likely to celebrate than men.
 - Two in three women (67%) celebrate Halloween, compared to only about half of men (55%) Less than one in ten Americans say they celebrate the Day of the Dead or Día de los Muertos.
 - The most popular ways to celebrate the Halloween season include decorating your house (39%), carving pumpkins (37%), watching scary movies (36%), and dressing up in a costume (32%). Women are more likely than men to engage in these Halloween activities, while twenty-nine percent of Americans do not do anything to celebrate Halloween.
 - Chocolate candy is by far Americans preferred Halloween candy (60%), beating out gummy candy (7%), caramel candy (7%), sour candy (6%) and hard candy (3%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between October 15-18, 2021. For this study, a sample of 1,013 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points for all respondents.





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Ipsos Poll

Conducted by Ipsos using KnowledgePanel®
A survey of the American general population (ages 18+)

Interview dates: October 15 – October 18, 2021

Number of interviews: 1,013

Number of Male interviews: 523

Number of Female interviews: 490

Margin of error: +/- 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled. Reduced bases are unweighted values.

NOTE: * = less than 0.5%, - = no respondents

Annotated Questionnaire:

1. Have you, personally, as an adult or as a child ever...?

Total Yes Summary

	Total October 2021 (N=1,013)	Total April 2021 (N=1,017)	Total October 2007 (N=1,013)
Woken up from sleep with sense of a strange presence in the room	27%	30%	30%
Seen or believed yourself to be in the presence of a ghost	24%	24%	23%
Read your horoscope that accurately predicted your day/week/month	21%	22%	N/A
Seen an unidentified flying object (UFO)	10%	11%	14%
Experienced the healing power of crystals	5%	4%	N/A

Total Yes Summary

	Total (N=1,013)	Male (N=523)	Female (N=490)
Woken up from sleep with sense of a strange presence in the room	27%	24%	31%
Seen or believed yourself to be in the presence of a ghost	24%	19%	28%
Read your horoscope that accurately predicted your day/week/month	21%	14%	27%
Seen an unidentified flying object (UFO)	10%	12%	8%
Experienced the healing power of crystals	5%	3%	6%



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a. Seen or believed yourself to be in the presence of a ghost

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	24%	19%	28%
No	67%	71%	63%
Don't know	9%	9%	9%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

b. Seen an unidentified flying object (UFO)

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	10%	12%	8%
No	82%	79%	84%
Don't know	8%	8%	7%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

c. Woken up from sleep with sense of a strange presence in the room

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	27%	24%	31%
No	66%	70%	63%
Don't know	6%	6%	6%
Skipped	1%	1%	*

d. Experienced the healing power of crystals

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	5%	3%	6%
No	90%	91%	88%
Don't know	5%	5%	5%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

e. Read your horoscope that accurately predicted your day/week/month

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	21%	14%	27%
No	68%	75%	62%
Don't know	10%	10%	11%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

2. In general, do you believe in or do you not believe in...

Total Believe In Summary

	Total October 2021	Total October 2007	Male	Female
Unidentified flying objects or U.F.O.s	39%	34%	43%	35%
Ghosts	36%	34%	32%	41%
Extra-sensory perception or E.S.P.	36%	48%	32%	39%
Spells or witchcraft	21%	19%	15%	26%

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a. Ghosts

	Total	Male	Female
Believe in it	36%	32%	41%
Do not believe in it	43%	49%	37%
Don't know	20%	18%	22%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

b. Spells or witchcraft

	Total	Male	Female
Believe in it	21%	15%	26%
Do not believe in it	60%	67%	55%
Don't know	18%	17%	19%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

c. Extra-sensory perception or E.S.P.

	Total	Male	Female
Believe in it	36%	32%	39%
Do not believe in it	37%	43%	31%
Don't know	26%	24%	29%
Skipped	1%	1%	1%

d. Unidentified flying objects or U.F.O.s

	Total	Male	Female
Believe in it	39%	43%	35%
Do not believe in it	35%	33%	37%
Don't know	26%	23%	28%
Skipped	1%	1%	*

3. Do you celebrate Halloween or the Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos? Select all that apply.

	Total	Male	Female
I celebrate Halloween	62%	55%	67%
I celebrate the Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos	7%	5%	8%
I do not celebrate either holiday	36%	42%	31%
Skipped	1%	2%	-



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4. Do you generally do any of the following during the Halloween season? Select all that apply.

	Total	Male	Female
Decorate your house	39%	31%	46%
Carve pumpkins	37%	31%	42%
Watch scary movies	36%	29%	42%
Dress up in a costume	32%	27%	37%
Go to a pumpkin patch	26%	19%	32%
Go trick-or-treating	25%	19%	30%
Go to a Halloween party	21%	20%	22%
Go to a haunted house/corn maze	17%	16%	19%
Host a Halloween party	7%	7%	7%
Other	6%	5%	7%
None of the above	29%	33%	26%
Skipped	1%	2%	*

5. What is your favorite type of Halloween candy?

	Total	Male	Female
Chocolate candy	60%	57%	63%
Gummy/Jelly candy	7%	7%	7%
Caramel candy	7%	7%	7%
Sour candy	6%	8%	5%
Hard candy	3%	2%	4%
Other	5%	5%	5%
I don't like any candy	10%	13%	8%
Skipped	1%	2%	1%





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About the Study

This Ipsos poll was conducted October 15 – 18, 2021, by Ipsos using the probability-based KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,013 general population adults age 18 or older. The sample includes 523 Males and 490 Females.

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, for results based on the entire sample of adults. The margin of sampling error takes into account the design effect, which was 1.16. The margin of sampling error is higher and varies for results based on other sub-samples. In our reporting of the findings, percentage points are rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, percentages in a given table column may total slightly higher or lower than 100%. In questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total substantially more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent.

The survey was conducted using KnowledgePanel, the largest and most well-established online probability-based panel that is representative of the adult US population. Our recruitment process employs a scientifically developed addressed-based sampling methodology using the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS – a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the US. Households invited to join the panel are randomly selected from all available households in the U.S. Persons in the sampled households are invited to join and participate in the panel. Those selected who do not already have internet access are provided a tablet and internet connection at no cost to the panel member. Those who join the panel and who are selected to participate in a survey are sent a unique password-protected log-in used to complete surveys online. As a result of our recruitment and sampling methodologies, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their phone or internet status and findings can be reported with a margin of sampling error and projected to the general population.

The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, household income, race/ethnicity by gender, race/ethnicity by age, and race/ethnicity by education. The demographic benchmarks came from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) except for the metropolitan status, which is not available from the 1-year ACS data, were obtained from the 2020 March Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–25, 26–39, 40-54 and 55+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Latinx, Asian, Other)
- Education (Less than High School, High School, Some College, Bachelor or higher)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West) by Metropolitan status (Metro, non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under \$25,000, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, \$150,000+)
- Race/ethnicity (White/Other Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Latinx, Asian) by Gender (Male, Female)
- Race/ethnicity (White/Other Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Latinx, Asian) by Age (18-44, 45+)
- Race/ethnicity (White/Other Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Latinx, Asian) by Education (Some College or less, Bachelor and beyond)





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About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest Insights and Analytics company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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