



Halloween and All Saints' Day: Five ways to celebrate

The Catholic world commemorates the dead with a host of eclectic events that take place from Salisbury to Central America. Simon Calder unearths some of the many options

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The last day in October and the first day of November are highly significant for Roman Catholics. All Hallows' Day on 1 November, and Halloween that precedes it, celebrate saintliness and commemorate the dead. It is believed to have originated in the third or fourth century of organised Christianity to celebrate martyrs, and was made a Catholic holiday by Pope Gregory IV in AD835.

The Latin American way

The first day of November is celebrated as the Day of the Dead throughout Mexico and Central America, often with family picnics taking place around the graves of departed members – and always with flamboyant church services. You could be almost anywhere in the region to encounter the commemorations, but Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, has a colourful annual parade in which locals paint their faces with skulls and wear fancy dress. Viator (020



3478 5933; viator.com) has a three-day "Day of the Dead Festivities in Oaxaca" experience which includes cemetery visits and a trip to the parade for £68 per person, including transport and a local guide, but not flights or accommodation.

Get into the spirit: Flores, Guatemala Elsewhere, Explore has an interesting Ancient Lands of the Maya tour that will be in the rainforest of Guatemala on 1 November. Departure for the 15-day tour is on 24 October, and the cost is £2,038 including flights,

transport and accommodation (0843 634 5157; explore.co.uk).

With the witches



The self-styled witchcraft hub of the US is Salem, where the notorious witch trials took place in the 17th century. Today the town – which is easy to reach by rail from Boston North station – revels in its unhappy heritage. Guided walks feature both graveyards and the town's place in revolutionary history.

The town's Peabody Essex Museum contains a miraculous range of exhibits, including a full-size peasant's house from 18th-century China. Details of spooky activities can be found athauntedhappenings.org, and

local operation Bewitched After Dark (001 978 498 4061; bewitchedafterdark.com) has a variety of tours for around \$20-\$30 (£12-19) per person. Flights to Boston are easy to find from Heathrow, with late-October fares at £500 return on American Airlines (aa.com), BA (ba.com) and Virgin Atlantic (virgin-atlantic.com).

In a historic setting

Wszystkich Swietych, as All Saints' Day translates, is a public holiday in Poland as it is in many other nations. Krakow is probably the most beautiful city in which to take part in the celebrations, particularly in the cathedral at the heart of the historic Wawel complex.

While you are there, visit the castle – and marvel at the State Apartments, with their coffered ceilings, leather wallpaper and





With not-so-friendly ghosts

You can barely move in the average historic city for haunted pubs, but top of the list for Visit England is the Haunch of Venison in Salisbury (01722 411313; restaurant-salisbury.com) – where you could take a Halloween drink in the company of a one-handed demented whist player who was savagely punished after being caught cheating.

On a pilgrimage



Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, the end of the pilgrims' routes from across Europe, is an excellent place to end up on 1 November. The English Way is a six-day trek from the port of El Ferrol to the cathedral in Santiago. It passes spectacular seascapes. Camino Ways (00 353 1525 2886; caminoways.com) can organise the land portion for €539, while flights are available on Vueling (vueling.com) to La Coruna and Ryanair (ryanair.co.uk) to Santiago.

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sumptuous tapestries. And if you are in the city either side of All Saints' Day, the 60th Krakow Jazz All Souls' Day festival (30 October and 2-9 November; krakowskiezaduszkijazzowe.dt.pl) features performances in various venues, including the atmospheric Wieliczka Salt Mine (00 48 12 278 73 02; wieliczka-saltmine.com), 10km away. Flight options are many – for example, from Edinburgh you can fly out with easyJet (easyJet.com) on 31 October and back on 2 November for £199 return.