

# Celebrating Halloween COVID-Style



I like Halloween more than Christmas. My husband and I used to have huge celebrations on Halloween. We'd throw a costume party and would invite friends over for food and drinks. Obviously, this year we will not be doing that, but Halloween is still my favorite holiday.

Apparently, we're not the only adults who get excited about Halloween. Even with COVID-19, statistics show 148 million consumers are going to celebrate Halloween in 2020. This year, 46% still plan to dress up, and 62% (in communities that are not experiencing a high number of COVID-19 cases) plan to hand out candy. That's the part that makes me queasy...all that candy.

Did you know people buy twice as much chocolate for Halloween than they do for Valentine's Day? Last year, parents purchased more than 90 million dollars worth of chocolate to give out on Halloween. Yikes! To make matters worse, 90 million dollars was just for the chocolate. That doesn't even count the other stuff like the little gummies, the pop rocks and the mini tootsie rolls. And we wonder why so many of our children suffer from obesity.

I used to pride myself on having the best Halloween candy bar selection in the neighborhood. Now that I know what all that sugar does to a child, I'm no longer interested in having the best candy on the block.

Since starting Plan Z I no longer give out candy. Now I get *better* stuff. I decided the smarter and healthier thing to do is to treat Halloween like a mini-Christmas.

Get my drift?

At Christmas, the tradition is to give gifts. I like that tradition very much. So instead of giving candy, I give toys on Halloween. There is no rule that says you must give kids candy on Halloween. There are all different kinds of "treats" that can make Halloween enjoyable.

I have found the perfect place to buy Halloween treats is at the craft store. This year I bought Halloween themed pencils, whistles, kazoos, crazy glasses, plastic monsters, flying frog toys, spider rings, and stretchy skeletons. Since we are not expecting as many trick-or-treaters this year, I spent a little more to get some high-quality swag. How fun is that!

In years past (pre-COVID-19), my husband and I would set up a card table by the front door and play board games, eat pizza and drink cocktails while we waited for trick-or-treaters to ring our bell. We will still be eating pizza and playing board games this year, but unfortunately, we won't be handing out our toys in person. This year we will be practicing a socially distant Halloween by leaving a small container with Halloween swag outside our door for trick-or-treaters to help themselves. To make sure the treats last all night, I will refill it periodically throughout the evening.

And yes, you heard me correctly. For dinner, we're ordering

pizza. Don't freak. Even I eat pizza. I just only eat one piece of crust. For the rest, I just pick off the toppings with a fork. My husband is an expert at piling even three sets of toppings onto one piece of crust and eating that. But I digress...

There are other things you can do to celebrate Halloween safely without all the candy. You can decorate the house, carve pumpkins, and bake low-carb cookies. You can have a spooky craft night. You can watch age-appropriate Halloween themed movies with your kids. You can even host a scavenger hunt for your kids and a few of their friends. That way you can celebrate Halloween at home with healthy food in a safe environment.

For me, knowing that I'm not contributing to childhood obesity makes me feel really good. By celebrating Halloween by focusing on toys and games, I know I am giving kids hours of fun. They can flip their flying frog across the table over and over again. They can tease the family cat with it. They can use their Halloween pencils for weeks. They can blow on their kazoo or their Halloween whistle til they drive their parents nuts.

And that makes for a Happy Halloween.

Cheers,