



Anticipation Is Reshaping America's Halloween Season

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New Consumer Insights from Hershey and Morning Consult Reveal Halloween Anticipation is Building Earlier, Creating New Moments for Treats, Traditions and Community

HERSHEY, Pa., July 29, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Halloween anticipation is starting long before October. According to *Unwrapping Halloween: Hershey's State of the Season Report*, Americans are turning Halloween into a series of unique moments that build over time. The result is a new Halloween calendar shaped less by a single shopping occasion and more by anticipation, connection, and community.

Here's a breakdown of the top trends this Halloween season based on The Hershey Company's (NYSE: HSY) newly commissioned consumer insights report from Morning Consult.

The New Halloween Calendar Starts with Anticipation



Summerween is one early signal of the larger behavioral shift around Halloween anticipation, the growing consumer behavior of engaging with Halloween months before October. It represents a lighter, more spontaneous "treat for me" expression of the season and extends consumers' excitement through purchases, traditions, decorations, and celebrations.

The findings show:

- **55% of parents** say they're in "Halloween mode" before October begins.

- **67% of parents** have already purchased Halloween candy this summer.
- **53% of Gen Z** consumers are familiar with the term "Summerween."
- **41% of parents** expect to be more involved in Halloween celebrations this year.

"As Halloween continues to evolve, it's become one of the longest and most anticipated seasons of the year," said Stacy Taffet, Chief Marketing and Growth Officer, The Hershey Company. "Consumers are creating rituals that blend tradition, self-expression, and community. We're meeting consumers where they are with the snacks and experiences that help make these moments memorable all Halloween season."

Summerween Extends the Season While Halloween Remains the Main Event



Consumers aren't embracing Halloween simply because products appear on shelves earlier. Hershey consumer insights show that Summerween and Halloween fulfill different needs for consumers.

Summerween is helping open the season, especially among younger consumers where 53% of Gen Z know the term. Social conversations grew from 14,000 mentions in 2023 to 65,000 in 2025, with consumers associating novelty, aesthetics, self-expression, and personal enjoyment with the occasion. Consumers view it as a playful, low-pressure occasion centered on creating new traditions and enjoying seasonal treats with friends and family.

Halloween continues to be rooted in tradition, community participation, seasonal rituals, and established family traditions. Trunk-or-treating, now embraced by 20% of Halloween participants, is one example of the ways people are expanding participation in the season alongside traditional trick-or-treating. These new occasions underscore the growing role of salty snacks, as consumers look for a variety of flavors, formats, and textures to enjoy across occasions.

Together, the two moments are creating a longer runway for celebration and making Halloween one of America's most expansive seasonal moments.

"As Halloween expands beyond October, we're seeing consumers create new ways to celebrate," said Katie DeCapria, Head of Hersheyween, The Hershey Company. "From Summerween with friends, stocking up for family movie nights or preparing for trick-or-treating, we've designed our seasonal portfolio with the right mix of products, pack sizes, and seasonal offerings to meet those moments. As the season evolves, our portfolio evolves alongside it."

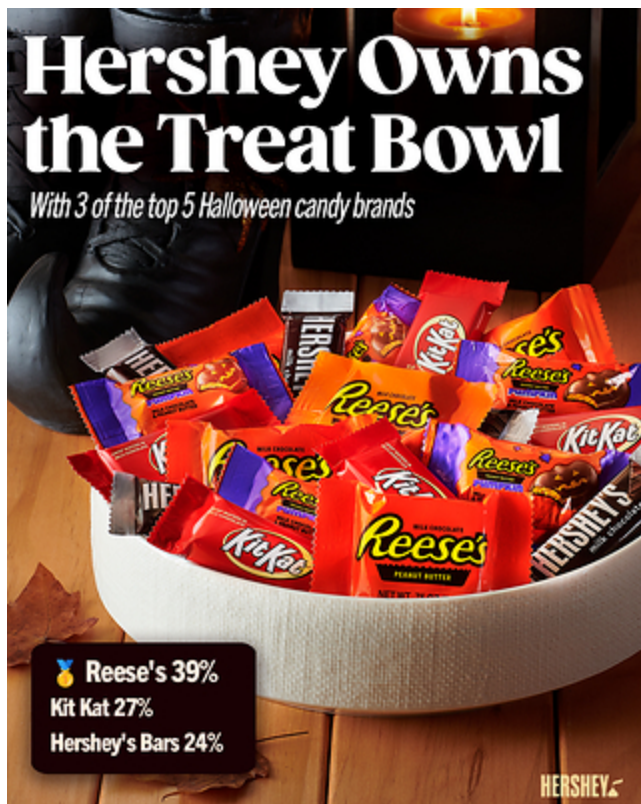
The Ideal Halloween Neighborhood is Built Around Community – And Great Candy



If Summerween marks the start of Halloween anticipation, neighborhood celebrations remain the season's emotional payoff. The report found that Americans overwhelmingly associate the best Halloween neighborhoods with participation, generosity, and community spirit – showing that the season ultimately culminates in shared traditions.

According to the report:

- **41% of consumers** say the perfect Halloween block is one where everyone participates.
- **39%** point to streets filled with trick-or-treaters.
- **Gen Z** prefers full-size candy bars at four times the rate of Baby Boomers (36% vs. 9%).
- **71% of Halloween enthusiasts** are highly excited about Halloween candy.
- **Three Hershey brands** rank among the Top 5 Halloween candies.
- **Reese's** is America's No. 1 Halloween candy (39%).



Treatonomics is Creating Moments of Joy



The findings point to a shift where consumers prioritize joy, opting for a memorable season full of creativity. Parents cite fun traditions (41%) and the excitement Halloween brings (39%) as leading reasons for celebrating ahead of October, underscoring Halloween's role as a time for self-expression and community connection.

Hershey calls this Treatonomics: a consumer trend in which people prioritize smaller, joyful experiences that fuel connection. Halloween treats are more than a purchase for a single night. They help build anticipation, signal generosity, bring neighbors together, and give families simple ways to celebrate throughout the season.

Candy remains central to Halloween because of the role it plays in creating shared experiences. Hershey isn't just winning candy rankings. It's winning the role candy plays in helping neighborhoods come together to celebrate.

Research Methodology

The Hershey Company partnered with Morning Consult to conduct an online survey among 3,026 U.S. adults, including 924 parents of children under 18. The survey was fielded July 8–10, 2026. Findings are based on a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults. Select results also highlight responses from self-identified Halloween enthusiasts (n=596). The margin of error is +/- 2% for all adults, +/- 3% for parents and +/- 4% for Halloween enthusiasts.

To learn more about the findings and explore how consumers are transforming Halloween into a season filled with unique celebrations, visit https://www.thehersheycompany.com/en_us/home/hersheyween.html.

FAQs

What is Hersheyween?

From Summerween to Halloween night, we know the trends, treats and tales that shape the season. We call it Hersheyween because no one knows Halloween like Hershey.

What is Summerween?

A summer celebration inspired by Halloween that emphasizes self-expression, novelty, treats, and seasonal fun.

What is Halloween anticipation?

The growing consumer behavior of engaging with Halloween months before October through seasonal purchases, traditions, decorations, and celebrations.

What is Treatonomics?

A consumer trend in which people prioritize affordable experiences that create happiness, connection, and anticipation.

How are people celebrating Halloween? What's changing?

Research from The Hershey Company and Morning Consult found that Halloween has evolved into a season of celebration that spans a third of the year. Nearly two-thirds of parents have already purchased Halloween candy during the summer months, and half are in "Halloween mode" before October begins.

Why are people celebrating Halloween earlier?

The Hershey Company's research found that consumers are motivated by the moments that make Halloween uniquely special. Parents cite fun traditions (41%) and the excitement Halloween brings (39%) as leading reasons for celebrating ahead of October, highlighting Halloween's role as a season for creativity, self-expression, and community connection.

Are parents changing how they celebrate Halloween?

Halloween is becoming a bigger part of families' seasonal traditions, with parents being the participation engine who reinforce traditions and expand holiday celebrations. According to The Hershey Company's research, 72% of parents are moderate participants or full enthusiasts, with 41% of parents expecting to be more involved in Halloween celebrations this year. The majority of parents (55%) are already in Halloween mode by late September, embracing a range of activities from decorating and gathering with friends and family to participating in community events and trick-or-treating traditions.

How is The Hershey Company responding to changing Halloween celebrations?

Hershey listens to how people celebrate, from the first signs of summer through Halloween night, and lets that shape everything we make: the products, the packaging, the assortments, and the way retailers merchandise the season. The goal is simple: the right treat, in the right format, at the right moment, for whatever kind of Halloween someone is having.

What role does candy play in Halloween celebrations?

The Hershey Company and Morning Consult research found that candy remains one of the most anticipated parts of Halloween. Seventy-one percent of Halloween enthusiasts say they are highly excited about Halloween candy, and nearly half of parents (46%) say the best trick-or-treating block is the one handing out full-size candy bars. Consumers' enthusiasm extends to the brands they love most, with Reese's ranking as America's No. 1 Halloween candy (39%).

What is the top Halloween candy?

Reese's ranks as America's No. 1 Halloween candy¹ according to Circana, the No. 1 chocolate brand of the season and the most-preferred Halloween candy, with three Hershey brands ranking among consumers' Top 5 Halloween favorites (Reese's, KIT KAT® and Hershey's). The Hershey Company will produce 26 million Reese's Pumpkins alone throughout the season.

What are the top snacks for Halloween?

In addition to fan-favorite candies, consumers are increasingly looking for salty snacks like *Pirate's Booty* and *Lesser Evil* that provide a sweet-and-salty combination to their celebrations, such as during trunk-or-treating and other non-candy occasions.

Pricing is at the sole discretion of the retailer.

¹ Reese's was the top-selling Halloween candy brand during the 10-week period ending 11/2/25, according to Circana (Total US MULO + Convenience)

About The Hershey Company

The Hershey Company is an industry-leading snacks company with a purpose to make more moments of goodness and a vision to lead next generation snacking. Hershey brings together more than 20,000 employees worldwide to deliver delicious, high-quality products across more than 85 brands in approximately 65 countries, generating more than \$11.7 billion in annual revenues.

Hershey brings its full portfolio to market as ONE Hershey, spanning confection, salty and functional snacking categories with beloved brands like *Hershey's*, *Reese's*, *Kisses*, *KIT KAT®*, *Jolly Rancher*, *Twizzlers* and *Ice Breakers*; salty snacks including *SkinnyPop*, *LesserEvil*, *Pirate's Booty* and *Dot's Homestyle Pretzels*; and a protein portfolio including *ONE Brands* and *Fulfil*.

For more than 130 years, Hershey has operated fairly, ethically and sustainably. Founder Milton Hershey established Milton Hershey School in 1909, and that legacy of purpose endures today through the company's commitment to helping children succeed through equitable access to education.

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About Morning Consult

Morning Consult is a global decision intelligence company changing how modern leaders make smarter, faster, better decisions. The company pairs its proprietary high-frequency data with applied artificial intelligence to better inform decisions on what people think and how they will act. Learn more at morningconsult.com.



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