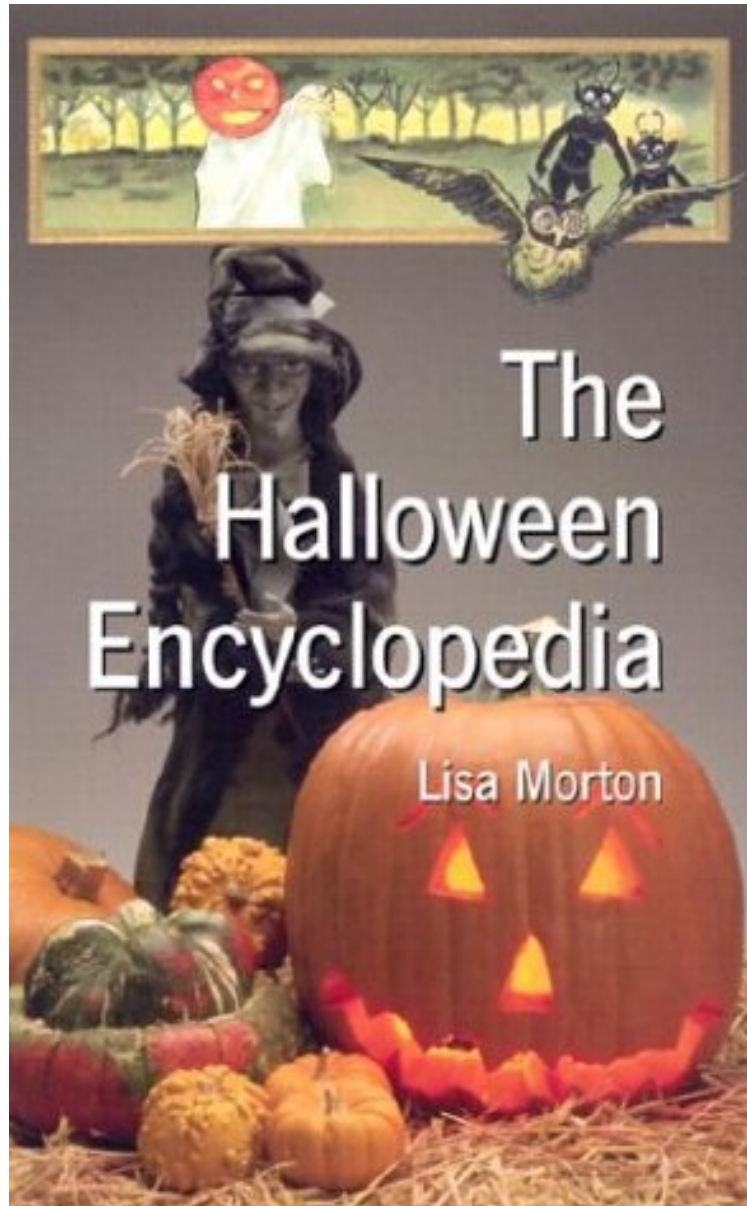


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The Halloween Encyclopedia

Lisa Morton

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Lisa Morton : The Halloween Encyclopedia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Halloween Encyclopedia:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very satisfiedBy Stephen MaxwellNearly brand new library copy!20 of 24 people found the following review helpful. A delightful collection of Halloween loreBy M. G. SFAELLOUI

enjoyed this book very much. It is a sound scholarly work and even though it has all the meticulous research to appeal to serious folklorists, it will also be of interest to the general reader. Apart from the main dictionary entries, there are also two appendices (appendix 1 contains a chronology of Halloween and appendix 2 discusses how Halloween has been portrayed in literature and the arts - the cinema is included). In addition, the author provides us with a rich bibliography of mainly academic works as well as a useful index. Halloween has long been a popular festival in Western Christendom. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the equivalent remembrances for the souls of the dead occur on the 'psychosavvata' or 'soul Saturday'; yet these take place in spring (like the ancient Greek 'Anthesia', the entry for which is to be found on p.13). It is not surprising therefore that this book contains details about customs from mainly Catholic countries. Many of these ethnic customs and traditions relate to certain countries such as Mexico (e.g. 'El Dia de los Muertos' or the Day of the Dead) and the Celtic cultures, especially the Irish, Scottish and Welsh. Indeed there are many entries that pertain to terms from these aforementioned cultures. However, in some of the longer entries, traditions from some other countries are also recorded. For instance, in the fascinating entry on All Souls Day we are informed about distinct celebrations from various European countries such as Poland, Italy, Portugal and Germany etc. There are, however, just a few constructive observations that could be made about certain very minor errors (which in no way detract from the exceptional quality of this book). For instance, in a few of the foreign language terms, especially those taken from Celtic languages, there could perhaps have been slightly more thorough editing. For instance, the Welsh 'hwch du gwta' mentioned on p. 166 as the 'black sow' is in fact the black tailless sow and the middle word should be 'ddu' (pronounced as the archaic English word 'thee') and not 'du' (even though the Welsh word 'du' does indeed mean 'black', the word in this context should undergo a mutation and thus be 'ddu'). On the subject of the Welsh black tailless sow, the equally important Halloween ghost from Wales called the 'lady wen' (white lady) was not mentioned. Moreover, the reference to the 'tylweth teg' should read 'tylwyth teg' (i.e. 'fair people' - one of several Welsh names for the fairies). The Irish word for fairy is 'si' (with an accent called a 'fada' on the 'i') whereas the author uses the outmoded spelling of 'sidhe'. From the fellow-Celtic land of Cornwall, there is an interesting but too concise entry on 'Allantide'. Here the reference to the 'Allan apples' does not connect these particular apples to the ritual of (Cornish) girls placing them under their pillows to inspire a dream of their future spouses (alluded to on p.16). This detail could easily have been cross-referenced to both the excellent entry on 'bobbing for apples' and perhaps to the equally interesting entry on 'fortune telling'. Something else that is of interest in this book is the frequent conflation that is apparent between Halloween and Christmas. Prof. Jack Santino (for whom there is actually an entry) referred to Halloween as the 'Irish Christmas'. Indeed, there is much in common between the two festivals in several cultures, not only in Ireland. This is why we can notice common traditions such as the Christmas game of 'snapdragon' also being played at Halloween. Other common customs can be seen in the entries on 'belsnickling', 'mumming', 'hogmanay', 'mistletoe' and 'strawboys' (the strawboys also feature in Irish weddings). Another noteworthy feature is the wise inclusion of Guy Fawkes Night/Bonfire Night (November 5th). Even though the 'Guy' (effigy) was not burnt in the original fires after the 1605 Gunpowder Plot (this custom was introduced a couple of centuries later), the bonfire on November 5th gradually replaced the earlier bonfires that had formerly been lit at Halloween. This book provides a wealth of fascinating information and opens up so many interesting questions about Halloween - both old and new. It is my favourite title about this celebration and I thoroughly recommend it! P.S. I am pleased to see that this wonderful work has been appreciated by other readers and that it has already been reprinted. In future editions (that is if the publisher is willing) I recommend that the work be further enhanced by the inclusion of a few more entries: e.g. the Lebanese festivities for Eid il Burbara. While these traditions concern St Barbara's day (4th December) they share many common elements with Halloween (fancy dress, trick or treating and pumpkins, etc).

6 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Not Howling With Chills :(By JWC IIDisappointed. This is "NOT" a hardback book. It "is" a paper back book. Way...way...way over priced at \$75.00; I had hoped that at this price it would be a hard back/library binding book. The McFarland publisher puts out over priced books, as compared with other books of similar general qualities, and is why I usually don't buy their respective products. There are many titles published by McFarland over the years that I would have purchased except that I will not support paying \$50.00 to \$100.00 for a book that should be priced between \$15.00 and \$30.00. After a general review of this book I am sad that I paid \$75.00 for a \$25.00 paperback book...buyer beware :(:(

The concept of Halloween as a holiday and cultural phenomenon worthy of serious study is only a few decades old, and only since the mid-1980s have scholars started to accept that Halloween's place in modern society (especially in American society) deserves more attention than it has received in horror fiction and children's books. The first book devoted solely to Halloween was published just over a century ago, and now, Halloween has its own encyclopedia. Major entries include Samhain, the Celtic ancestor of Halloween; witches, a major Christian addition to the mythology of Halloween and one that still generates interest and controversy; skeletons, a universally recognized symbol of death; the Day of the Dead, the Mexican holiday that is often compared to Halloween; the jack-o'-lantern, which has its roots in folktales starring the rascally Jack who always manages somehow to beat the Devil; and trick-or-treating, the most loved and misunderstood American Halloween ritual. Hundreds of small entries cover Halloween history and

mythology, fortune-telling lore, harvest legends, and 20th century additions to the holiday's rituals.

From Booklist Several hundred A-Z entries cover the history, folklore, symbols, rituals, artifacts, and activities of Halloween. Morton's research extends to Wiccan lore, Celtic observances, and Christian mythology, including the Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead. She writes enthusiastically about folk customs and is sensitive to the controversies surrounding horror literature, witchcraft, and demonism. Without undue pedantry, she explains the house-to-house souling pilgrimage, the incorporation of cabbages in Scottish holidays, the source of the boogeyman in bogs, and the lengthy training of Druid priests in predicting the future. Contributing to data are detailed photos and line drawings--players enjoying a fireside game of snap-apple, an illustration from the Luttrell Psalter, a cook preparing holiday eggs, children around a bonfire. A lengthy entry on Guy Fawkes Day, which absorbed many Halloween traditions, includes a detailed history, an engraving of the gunpowder conspirators, descriptions of regional variations, and the texts of several popular rhymes. Assisting teachers, researchers, and the media is a two-page chronology of Halloween, beginning with ancient Egyptian writings and a post-9/11 urban legend about going to malls on Halloween. A second appendix lists and summarizes literature and films from 1714 to 2001. The bibliography is thorough, covering early sources as well as recent works. The author could have improved on the list of books by separating primary and secondary sources. This generously illustrated and indexed overview is a worthy addition to public and school libraries as well as the reference shelves of journalists and leaders of community events. Information on Halloween can be found in resources such as *Folklore of American Holidays* (3d ed., Gale, 1998) and *Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations of the World Dictionary* (3d ed., Omnigraphics, 2003), but *The Halloween Encyclopedia* offers much more detail. RBB Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Well-written resource." -- *Library Journal* "Generously illustrated and indexed...a worthy addition." -- *Booklist/RBB* "Recommended." -- *Arba* About the Author Lisa Morton is also the author of *The Cinema of Tsui Hark* (2001, \$45, "thorough" *VideoScope*). She lives in North Hollywood, California.