

Blog 37 – Halloween in Nanjing



Halloween is one of my favorite holidays of the year. Before I came to Nanjing, I was a little worried that I wouldn't have a chance to celebrate this amazing holiday in China, but it turns out I was wrong! We had an exciting amount of fun as the ones I've celebrated in Florida.

Since the students at our school are from all over the world and not every student's family celebrate Halloween, the school named the party: "Autumn Festival". All you had to do was wear a costume and be prepared for a hyper-active evening at the party! In Florida, I had been a "Chinese princess" for four years, mainly because I knew not many kids would think to dress up as that and I felt special as the only one. But since I'm in China now, there's really nothing special about wearing a Qipao for Halloween, so I decided to try something different --- a pirate. Before the party, I learned how to make realistic scars! I ended up going to the party with scars lashed all over my hands and face. I wasn't intending to be a scary pirate, but it's always fun to try! That night, students dressed up in all kinds of costumes such as zombies, princesses, super heroes, witches, fairies, bears, etc. Believe it or not, some of the local supermarkets were selling Halloween costumes and decorations this year. My neighbors bought their skeleton and princess fairy costumes from the market across the street from our school. I guess many foreigners in Nanjing have gradually brought the Halloween spirit to this city!



Even though the party is called the "Autumn Festival", the decorations at our school were all traditional Halloween style. Near the school's entrance, there's a very dark, long hallway that was named the "Scary tunnel". It was decorated with orange and black paper tassels, skeletons hanging from the ceiling and fake spiders dangling in the air. Some older kids even dressed up as monsters or zombies and hid behind columns waiting to scare their next victim. At first, I was too scared to go by myself. I waited until my friend had arrived so that I could go in with her. We both ended up coming out laughing instead of screaming! The tunnel wasn't that scary to us, but my mom was startled by a huge spider that suddenly dropped onto her shoulder. There were many games at the party, such as balloon popping, mini bowling, beanbag toss and more! Mouth watering hot dogs, sweet cupcakes, edible spiders, crunchy popcorn and soft, green cotton candy were also offered as special treats that night. Surprisingly, some Chinese entertainment was brought to the party too, like dragon dance, Beijing Opera mask painting, paper cutting and candy art. It definitely added some Chinese flavor to the party.



We live in a compound which is 5 minutes away from my school. There are 75 NIS families out of the 200 residents in our community. This year, those NIS families voluntarily organized a trick or treating event. In order to identify those houses, each participating family needs to decorate their house. In Florida, our community would hold a competition for the best decorated houses almost every year. Even though there's none here, my mom still ordered a bunch of decorations from a Chinese website, taobao.com. Our house was literally glowing in orange light from the jack-o-lanterns, draped in paper ghosts, pumpkin decorations and lanterns with spiders printed on the surface. As my friends and I walked around in our costumes, some local Chinese residents' children living in our community noticed us and learned about this interesting event: a "trick-or-treating". We shared "free candy" with them and all had fun! When I returned back to my house, I found that all three big bags of candy we bought were gone! I guess we better prepare more next year!



These couple of years, Halloween is getting more and more popular in China. Although a lot of people don't quite understand the religious meaning behind it, they still think of it as a fun and unique holiday for being able to dress up and collect candies.