

TRAVEL • THINGS TO DO

10 Travel Ideas to Lean into Spooky Season This Month

October is a vibe. Get into it.

By [Vanita Salisbury](#) Updated on 10/1/2021 at 2:20 PM



Spooktacular. | PHOTO COURTESY OF PUMPKIN NIGHTS FEST

This month is a sensory explosion: the temperatures are crisp, the leaves turn gorgeous hues of orange and yellow, and the air is scented with—what is that? Ah, yes, PSL. There's no shortage of things to do this October, so dig out those chunky sweaters and get ready for fall festivals, hayrides, new wooly friends, and gourds with names like "Warty Goblin." And steel yourself: this is the season where benign homes turn terrifying, pumpkins are set ablaze for really no reason, and horror movie sets come to life. You may even see a sasquatch or two.

Gourds, gourds, gourds

Did someone say pumpkins? This month our favorite orange gourd comes to us in all forms. Find them in competition at the “[Heavyweight Championship of Gargantuan Gourds](#)” in Half Moon Bay, California (Oct 11), where massive pumpkins go head-to-head for a chance at a \$9/pound prize, plus an extra \$30,000 mega-purse. (For reference, the current heavyweight champion pumpkin is 2,703 pounds.)

See giant gourds fashioned into boats at the [Pumpkin Regatta](#) (Oct 16-17) in Goffstown, New Hampshire or discover them built into fantastical lands at [Pumpkin Nights](#) (Oct 23-31) in Dallas and Austin, everywhere from a Monster Mash to a Neon Reef to a Pirate's Cove, where you'll encounter 10-foot-tall pumpkin beasts, dragons, a gigantic pumpkin guitar and more. Gourds will be elaborately painted by local artists in [Damariscotta, Maine](#) (Oct 8-11) and then, of course, see them on fire in elaborate Jack-o-Lantern blazes from [Rhode Island](#) to [Illinois](#) to [upstate New York](#). Pumpkins! They're not just for pie.