



# HERSHEY

# UNWRAPPING HALLOWEEN:

## Hershey's State of the Season Report

### HALLOWEEN IS AMERICA'S SEASON OF ANTICIPATION

*New consumer research and Hershey's own shipment data tell the same story:  
Halloween has become a season, not a single night.*



## Executive Summary

# FIVE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT HALLOWEEN IN 2026

1

Halloween has evolved into a season spanning a third of the year rather than a single day.

2

Summerween is uniquely extending consumers' engagement with Halloween.

3

Halloween celebrations are driven by anticipation, tradition and joy.

4

Candy remains a key driver of connection and community.

5

Consumers are prioritizing memorable experiences over thrift.

**55% of parents are already in "Halloween mode" before October begins.**

**67% of parents have already bought Halloween candy this summer.**

**Fun tradition (41%) and mood lift (39%) outrank beating the crowds (21%).**

**Reese's is America's No. 1 pick for the best Halloween block, with The Hershey Company holding 3 of the top 5 brands overall.**

**41% of parents expect to be more involved in Halloween this year than last.**

### WHAT IS "HALLOWEEN ANTICIPATION"?

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

# HALLOWEEN DOESN'T START IN OCTOBER ANYMORE

It's Halloween season, and it starts now.



**67%**

of parents have already bought Halloween candy this summer

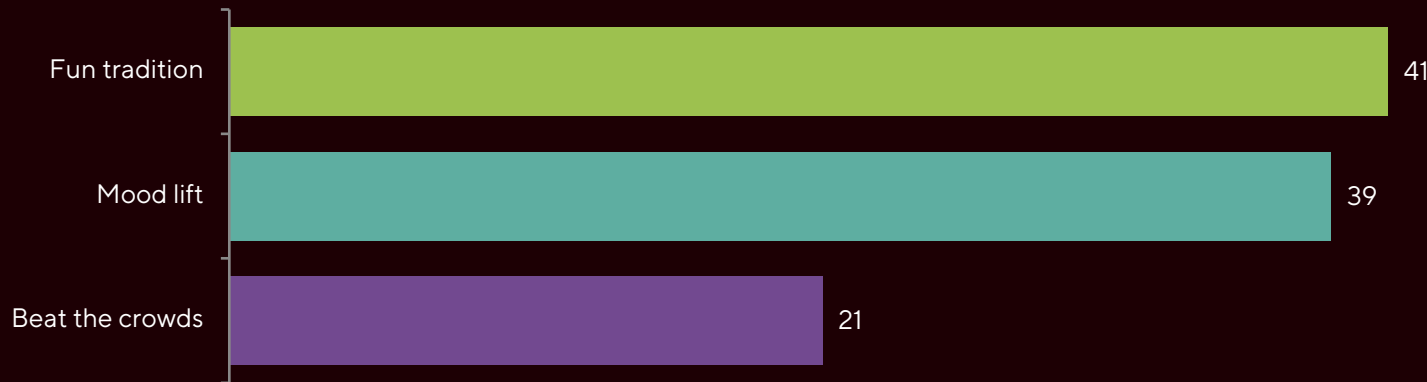
**55%**

of parents are in "Halloween mode" before October begins

**53% vs 6%**

Gen Z vs. Boomers who know the term "Summerween"

**The reason isn't practical, it's emotional.**



Q: Why parents start celebrating early (top 3 reasons, % selected)

**EARLY-SEASON PURCHASE INTENT**

**77%**

Chocolate, likely to buy before September

**72%**

Gummy candy, growing right behind it



# CALL IT “TREATONOMICS”

Halloween fans want joy and generosity, over thrift.

## WHAT IS “TREATONOMICS”?

A consumer trend in which people prioritize joyful, memorable experiences and generosity over simply chasing the lowest price.



41%

of parents expect to be more involved this year, vs. 27% of all adults

Q: compared to previous years, how involved do you expect to be this Halloween?

46%

of parents say the perfect block hands out full-size candy bars

Q: For each of the following, how much would it add to making the best Halloween block in America?

4x

more likely Gen Z is to prefer full-size bars over Boomers

Q: When you buy candy for yourself early in the Halloween season, which format do you prefer?



Halloween fans aren't looking for the bargain Halloween. They're hoping to create and participate in the most memorable one. As consumers pull back on bigger purchases, they're leaning into smaller moments of joy.

People aren't extending Halloween because retailers put products on shelves earlier. They're extending it because the rituals, flavors, traditions and treats give them something joyful to look forward to.

**The candy aisle is where Halloween anticipation begins.**

# TRADITIONS, NOT NOSTALGIA

## Halloween candy builds connection across every generation.

The candy people grew up with is becoming the candy they pass down. Chocolate remains the clear favorite across every generation, and parents are actively seeking a mix of chocolate and sweets for their own celebrations.

### EXCITEMENT ABOUT HALLOWEEN CANDY

50%

of parents



71%

of Halloween enthusiasts

Excitement about Halloween candy climbs sharply the more engaged someone already is with the season.

### A LONG-TAIL VIEW OF THE FUTURE

Most brands have to choose between today's consumer and tomorrow's. Hershey doesn't have to. Reese's leads across the board, Kit Kat® is close behind as a rising favorite, and the mix of chocolate, sweets and salty snacks keeps every generation coming back for more.

*This is a family tradition, built one bowl at a time, across generations.*



# AMERICA BUILT ITS DREAM HALLOWEENTOWN

And Hershey owns the treat bowl.

## WHAT MAKES THE BEST BLOCK

46%

Houses handing out full-size candy bars

41%

A neighborhood where everyone participates

39%

Streets packed with trick-or-treaters

Q: Drivers of the “best Halloween block in America,” ranked

## WHAT'S IN THE BOWL



Q: Candy for the best Halloween block in America, % selected

3 OF 5

TOP CANDY BRANDS ARE  
THE HERSHEY COMPANY'S

Parents want a real mix of chocolate and sweets on the best block, not just one winner.

# FAST FACTS

More findings from the study, at a glance.

**82%** of parents are likely to buy chocolate in October, the top score of the season

**73%** of parents plan to carve a pumpkin

**64%** of parents bought chocolate in just the last four weeks, more than any other candy type

**58%** of parents prefer snack size specifically for trick-or-treaters

**79%** of parents plan to watch Halloween or scary movies this year

**69%** of parents plan to take their kids trunk-or-treating

**61%** of Halloween enthusiasts look forward to the season “a great deal,” 3x the rate of all adults

**41%** of parents expect to be more involved in Halloween this year than last



## WHAT HERSHEY IS WATCHING

Growth of Summerween ● Rise of sweet-and-salty occasions ● Community-centered celebrations ● Cross-generational traditions

# METHODOLOGY

## Unwrapping Halloween: Hershey's State of the Season Report

### FIELDING DATES

July 8–10, 2026

### SAMPLE

**N = 3,026 U.S. adults, including 924 parents of children under 18 and 596 self-identified Halloween enthusiasts**

### MARGIN OF ERROR

**±2%**

### METHODOLOGY

**Online survey conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of The Hershey Company**

#### ABOUT MORNING CONSULT:

Morning Consult is a global data intelligence company delivering real-time insights on what people think and how they behave.

All findings reflect self-reported consumer attitudes and behaviors collected via online survey panel.  
Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding or multi-select questions.