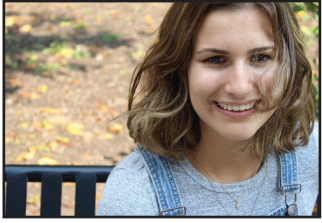


Three Halloween costumes that need to be reinvented



by Carly Travis

I've never been a fan of Halloween. My dislike of trick-or-treating started at a young age due to my nut and dairy allergy.

I was the kid who could only reach for the sugary, chewy candies as opposed to the king-sized classics. You can imagine how awful that was for a kid.

Now my dislike has lessened because the holiday is becoming less prevalent in my (almost) adult life.

In terms of the costume category, I'm not entirely opposed to dressing up; I applaud those who think of something creative and laugh at others who choose to support the economy and buy a costume in a bag.

I've come to the conclusion that every year the same three get-ups are seen on the same types of people. Below are the three different Halloween costumes you're bound to see on Oct. 31, as well as some tips to make these outfits a little more creative.

The sports fan

This person is typically a male who accidentally wears his favorite

sports jersey to school, throws a hat on with it and proceeds to parade around saying that he's a "Blackhawks fan" for Halloween. Essentially, this has been his default costume for the past four years: it requires no remembrance of the celebration and zero effort.

In order to make this outfit a little more exciting, I suggest wearing the aforementioned sports paraphernalia and then adorn the look with a literal fan around your neck. That way, people won't grimace at the fact that you put no effort in, but instead praise you for your cleverness.

The Tumblr inspired costume

Unlike the sports fan, the Tumblr inspired costume is relatively witty. With the that being said, you have to know your audience.

This look is usually taken after a popular meme seen on the blogging network and requires an adept sense of humor to fully understand it. So if your crowd doesn't know what "Grumpy Cat" is, then you've just wasted two hours in the mirror doing your makeup that might be mistaken for black face.

To make this work for every crowd, get inspired by a social media platform that everyone is connected with, like Instagram. Decide to dress up as instagrammer "The Fat Jewish" (ponytail up-do + sunglasses + pizza shirt + beard + bottle of Rosé) and you're bound to win all the costume contests.

The black cat

Halloween isn't truly Halloween if you don't come across at least one black cat. Real, fake, inappropriate, or childish, they're everywhere on this particular night. In middle school, the costume wasn't nearly as popular; in high school, this girl is everywhere.

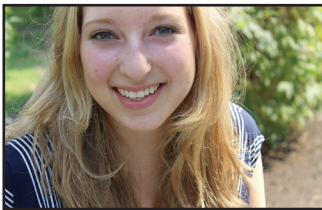
Like the sports fan, the black cat wants the easy way out of Halloween. All black? Check. Feline-like ears? Check. A black nose and whiskers? Check, check. It's a given that all the essentials are already hanging in your closet.

There's another hidden intention to this choice of dress-up: no one will ask you what you are, they can already see it. Often, people shy away from certain outfits for fear of having to explain it to those incapable of using their imagination.

To make this classic costume more creative, wear a cardboard box around your waist hung by suspenders. Then, tape cut-out pictures of kittens to the edge of the box. Next, attach random bits of trash onto the box and call yourself a "litter of kittens."

Whatever you choose to dress up as, just know that there are ample ways to make it more exciting. Whether that's adding a box of kittens around your waist or wearing a fan around your neck, it's the simple elements that make people smile.

Handbags, not just a fashion statement



by Camille Baer

You can have an endless debate about which is better: backpacks versus handbags. The reality is that they're heavy and annoying, and either way, you have to lug it everywhere.

People like to criticize those who use handbags instead of backpacks because they believe it puts fashion in front of function.

I'm here to tell you that you're wrong.

Yes, handbags are generally more fashionable (nothing wrong with that). But here's the way I see it. If you're given the option to carry around the same neon lycra North Face backpack as everyone else, versus a unique bag tailored to your style, I'd go with the second option every time.

Rumor has it handbags can't hold as much as a backpack can.

Myth busted— When I made the switch, I could fit just as much, if not more in the handbag.

I realized I had no need for the multiple zippered pouches and secret compartments like I did in middle school.

No more carrying around rulers, tons of markers and sticky notes, highlighters and massive binders.

So, why the need for such a bulky backpack? If you're worried about being unorganized, use a pencil case to stuff anything you usually would put in that "secret" compartment at the top of your backpack. Boom. Consolidation completed.

Another great thing about handbags is that you don't have to worry about hurriedly shoving things in a folder at the end of class, struggling to close the zipper, not to mention the stress of your impatient friend tapping her foot waiting for you to hurry up.

If that sounds like your life, then stress begone.

Having a handbag means that your bag is always open, and you never even have to worry about things falling out.

Weird, right? Wrong. It's awesome.

Just some food-for-thought: at the end of class when everyone starts packing up too early and your teacher gets mad because of their loud and disruptive unzipping and zipping, you will never worry about making a peep.

A negative comment I've heard about using a handbag is that it unevenly distributes the weight to one side of your body.

I've never personally experienced any trouble with this, but if you're still apprehensive, get a bag that is messenger style with a cross-body strap. You'll still achieve the same purpose, but with a more supportive effect.

The biggest difference I've noticed about making the transition, while it may sound corny or insignificant, was that I felt more mature.

It was freshman year when I made the switch, and I felt more like an adult using a bag similar to the ones I'd seen on high school based TV shows and movies. Changing bags signified that middle school was officially over.

It's surprising how much of a difference the smallest change can make.

Editorial Cultural Halloween costumes are unintentionally hurtful

We all know people who have dressed up as a culture before. Whether dressing up as different countries for Turnabout or wearing a Native American headdress to Lollapalooza, there are many examples of this phenomenon.

When it comes to costumes or dress up themes, it can be difficult to come up with a creative idea. Sometimes, the idea of choosing a cultural theme seems like the easy way out. You can dress up as a Mexican person by wearing a sombrero and a poncho. It's a pretty easy outfit, and one that can be thrown together on relatively short notice.

While you may not intend for these costumes to be hurtful to the given group, by stereotyping their culture into one outfit, you are reducing a group of people into nothing but a Halloween costume.

Buzzfeed has picked up on the cultural trend towards these cultural appropriation outfits, and recently posted a video where Mexican-Americans try on "Mexican outfits," from "Hey Amigo!" (which includes a stuffed donkey) to a "Tequila Shooter" costume. After the BuzzFeed employees tried on the costumes, they remarked on how inaccurately the outfits captured the essence of the cultures, saying, "I don't have amigos that dress like this."

One woman's comment on the video read, "This is stupid. No one takes Halloween costumes seriously. I don't see doctors getting offended about slutty doctor outfits." The main difference between these examples is that one is born into their race, but they have the power to choose their profession. Clearly not all people will see eye to eye on the issues with cultural appropriation in Halloween outfits.

Another BuzzFeed video in the series focused on Japanese culture and geisha costumes. A geisha is a Japanese girl or woman who has been highly trained in the performance arts and entertainment of guests. "The Geisha with the Dragon Tattoo" costume had a plunging neckline and a "Mandarin collar choker." Mandarin is Chinese, not Japanese, which was their first mistake. Additionally, geishas are all about "mystery and intrigue, not about showing as much of your chest as possible." According to BuzzFeed's Japanese-Americans, the costumes succeeded in "getting almost everything wrong about Japanese culture and geishas."

Again, people got riled up in the comments section. After one commenter wrote that no one making these costumes was intending to be hurtful, another person commented, "If I accidentally ran you over with a monster truck because I was busy texting, you'd still have a severed spinal cord. Lack of ill intent doesn't excuse outcomes caused by disregard for others."

So next time you are considering what to wear as a costume, keep in mind that while you aren't intentionally being disrespectful towards a race, culture, or group of people, you cannot know how a member of that group may react. Instead, respect all people and choose a different costume.



Gannon Lee

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@bread_N_loaftus: I think I have a great costume this year! I plan on being a popsicle. |