

BRANCHING OUT

THE US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM

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October 2013

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The US Forest Service International Visitor Program (IVP) facilitates participation in a wide variety of professional and educational exchanges, which encourage scientific collaboration and discovery, increase intercultural understanding, and promote cooperation among people of many cultures and countries.

CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

The US Forest Service motto, “Caring for the Land and Serving the People” captures its mission to sustain the health and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Understanding those needs, especially those related to outdoor recreation, is no simple task, however. As the demographics of our population are rapidly changing, so are interests, needs, perceptions and demands. How and why groups of people recreate are important topics for Forest Service social science researchers who hope to expand and diversify opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is no surprise that culture plays a significant role in outdoor recreation preferences.



USFS Research and Development
http://www.fs.fed.us/research/highlights/highlights_display.php?in_high_id=135

Forest Service researchers have found that even though the US population is extremely diverse ethnically and racially, there is considerably less racial diversity among outdoor recreationists and visitors to the National Forests. Across more than 192 million acres of National Forest and Grasslands in the United States, recreation opportunities on public lands are plentiful and varied. Offerings range from picnicking, hiking, wildlife viewing, camping, bicycling, swimming and skiing to driving along scenic byways, fishing, hunting, horseback riding and all-terrain vehicle use. However, there is much less ethnic, racial or cultural diversity among the people who regularly participate in outdoor recreation activities. Historically, white people participate in outdoor recreation at much higher rates than people of other races.¹

The Forest Service Research & Development division, the largest forestry research organization in the world, works in cooperation with many organizations and university partners to improve the health and sustainable use of our Nation’s forests and grasslands through applied research and science-based planning activities. Land management

¹The term “White” has been used in place of “Caucasian” or other terms in much of the Forest Service research publications with notes to acknowledge the difficulty in selecting terms, the existence of preferences of particular terms and the wish not to offend readers with terms. General Technical Report PSW-GTR-210, October 2008: Recreation Visitor Research: Studies of Diversity, editors Chavez, Deborah J.; Winter, Patricia L.; Absher, James D., October 2008: http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr210/psw_gtr210.pdf

decisions are informed not only by biological and physical scientists, but also a well-established cadre of social scientists coming from many disciplines and specialties including anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, landscape architecture, political science, psychology and sociology. Forest Service social scientists study human perceptions, attitudes, traditions and behaviors and apply their findings to sustainable public land management, fire prevention, conservation education, recreation, law enforcement and outreach efforts.²

By trying to better understand the preferences, perceived constraints and actual experiences of racial and ethnic minorities visiting National Forests, USFS social scientists and recreation planners are working hand-in-hand to increase participation by a more diverse population of recreationists. Researchers and specialists in conservation education, interpretation, signage, trail design and construction and recreational site design are looking at several aspects of outdoor recreation experiences, such as knowledge of National Forest recreation sites prior to visiting, signage and educational information at the Forest, and how equipment and facilities are situated to accommodate various types of users.

Early theories about barriers to minority recreation participation were tied to minority access issues such as education levels, income levels, proximity to recreation sites, transportation or socio-economic marginalization or discrimination. Scientists now look at more contextual and culturally-based reasons for nonparticipation including access to information, cultural perceptions of nature, youth exposure to the outdoors, and culturally-based leisure preferences of families.³

In 1987, the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW), located in Southern California, “blazed a new trail” for the Agency by chartering a new applied research work unit to examine and address the needs of increasingly diverse recreation visitors to National Forests in that region. The

²USDA Forest Service Social Science Research Agenda, February 2004: <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/pdf/ssagenda.pdf>

³Chapter 11: Outdoor Recreation and Nontraditional Users: Results of Focus Group Interviews With Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Robert Burns, Elizabeth Covelli, and Alan R. Graefe, General Technical Report PSW-GTR-210, October 2008: Recreation Visitor Research: Studies of Diversity, editors Chavez, Deborah J.; Winter, Patricia L.; Absher, James D., October 2008: http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr210/psw_gtr210.pdf

Know the Facts about Insurance and Medical Care in the United States

Health care in the United States is complex and confusing. It is important to have a basic understanding of how the system works to ensure the continued medical, safety, and financial well-being of visitors to the United States and their dependents.

Medical treatment in the United States is very expensive. Unlike many other countries, the US government does not provide health care for everyone. Therefore, it is important for all international visitors and their dependents to get appropriate medical insurance and to play an active role in making decisions about their health care.

Most international visitors find the cost of medical insurance and the prevailing rates for health care to be very high in the United States compared to what they are accustomed to paying. A visit to the doctor can cost hundreds of dollars, and a visit to the emergency room, even if you are not admitted for a hospital stay, can cost several thousands of dollars.

There are no cooperative agreements between governments to reduce costs for foreigners who may be covered by social health care systems in their home countries. As such, the US Department of State requires all J-1 Visa holders and their dependents to be covered by health/accident insurance meeting certain minimum standards.

These minimum insurance policy coverage requirements are:

- Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per person per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500
- Medical evacuation expenses in the amount of \$10,000

Please be aware that most insurance policies have limits on covering the costs for treatment of pre-existing conditions. Read policies carefully to fully understand what limitations might apply to any pre-existing conditions you or your dependents may have. Pre-existing conditions are defined as any condition for which a licensed Physician was consulted, or for which treatment or medication was prescribed, or for which manifestations of symptoms would have caused a person to seek medical advice (such as pregnancy, cardiac conditions, physical injuries, etc.) prior to the effective date of coverage under the policy. Sometimes, there are waiting periods for pre-existing conditions. For example, the patient might have to wait six months before any treatment of pre-existing conditions would be covered under a policy and thus eligible for reimbursement.

Please consult your host to know whether it is your responsibility to obtain health insurance that meets the J-1 Exchange Visitor program requirements or if the host will be purchasing insurance coverage for you (and your dependents). You also can contact your Alternate Responsible Officer (IVP staff member who signed your DS-2019 form) if you need further information on obtaining an appropriate health insurance policy for the duration of your program.

PSW group published the Agency’s first compilation of research papers on diversity and recreation in 2008, “Visitor Research: Studies of Diversity.” Lead editors, Deborah Chavez, Patricia Winter and James Absher have been major contributors to Forest Service cultural research over the past few decades.

Dr. Deborah Chavez is a Forest Service Program Manager who initiated a long-term study of Latinos’ recreational use of forests in 1990. In this study and in others, one of her particular interests was picnicking activity patterns, and to what extent ethnicity, as a variable, makes a difference in behaviors. She found that in comparison to whites, Latinos often make picnicking a day-long activity where they cook and share meals with extended family and multiple generations. These findings eventually influenced recreation site design changes and renovations to group larger picnic tables closer together with more grills and trash cans.⁴

Another outcome of the research of Dr. Chavez and her colleagues were improvements in the methods used to communicate with a diverse group of visitors. With the assistance of university colleagues Dr. Chavez examined comprehension of signage on the San Bernadino, Gifford Pinchot and Willamette National Forests (2002, 2003 & 2006). Dr. Chavez and her colleagues evaluated comprehension of some of the international symbols used to convey important messages about permissible activities in recreation areas. Her data on various facility and recreation symbols showed that the correct interpretation of graphic symbols was not universal. Some interpretations or misinterpretations can be culturally based. Below are some of the most frequently misunderstood, yet commonly used symbols:

						
Correct: Amphitheater	Correct: Wading	Correct: Interpretive trail	Correct: Winter recreation area	Correct: Fish hatchery	Correct: Natural study area	Correct: Environmental study area
Incorrect: Alarm Baseball Field Siren	Incorrect: Bridge Jesus on the Water	Incorrect: Trail directions Information ahead Interactive TV	Incorrect: Blizzard Ice ahead Snowflake	Incorrect: Fish here Religion	Incorrect: Adventure Viewpoint	Incorrect: Guided tour Maze head Air turbulence

Her research concluded that to better communicate and provide service to diverse visitors, public managers would need to alter some of the international symbols. Much of Chavez’s work has been related to connections between urban people and natural areas. She has also been actively involved in multiple studies aimed at understanding urban youth recreation patterns and getting youth of all ethnicities out to Forests.

Dr. Patricia Winter, research social scientist, has integrated research from various disciplines to inform the Agency about cultural influences on effective communication and selecting appropriate media and outreach outlets to promote outdoor recreation. She emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences and preferences in information-seeking and information-processing in order to more effectively reach and serve a more diverse public. Winter’s collaborative research has informed land managers of the value of community group outreach and encouraged broader use of ethnic media (broadcast, print and internet). Ethnic media are seen as more effective in reaching some users because language, cultural identifica-

⁴The Changing Faces of Forest Recreation: Latino Recreation Patterns, Science Perspectives, USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, Spring 2009

tion with the message, and perceptions of credibility of the source of message improve information processing.

The researchers' messages about effective communication have been heard at the local and national levels and have impacted many of the Agency's public service and promotional campaigns. In 2011, the Forest Service and the Ad Council introduced Descubre El Bosque, the Spanish-language version of the popular online conservation education website Discover the Forest. The Forest Service worked with the Hispanic Communications Network (HCN), which is made up of more the 200 radio and 100 newspaper affiliates serving the Latino community nationwide, to design the website and a promotional campaign aimed at expanding opportunities for the nation's largest minority population.

Another study initiated by the USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station and Oregon State Parks⁵ sought to understand the needs of existing and potential stakeholders in public land management. Among the major themes that emerged across minority group representatives was the preference for spending time with the family unit. The influence of older generations on younger people's access to or interest in the outdoors was also significant. The study also showed how perceptions of the cleanliness or the age or type of facilities affected interest in outdoor recreation. For example, Asian Americans interviewed expressed a dislike in camping in tents and, similar to the African Americans interviewed, they had concerns about recreating in remote areas or areas that did not feel safe. The data also reinforced findings from other studies and showed that there was a general lack of awareness of recreation opportunities available on public lands and that there was a strong need for different types of information and methods of delivery, such as multilingual materials and outreach via community groups, to facilitate greater participation among these groups.

In 2008, USFS Northern Research Station scientists published several papers on Hmong Americans and their relationship to outdoor recreation and public lands in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The findings from participants led to cultural awareness training for land managers and hunting safety training for newly arrived Hmong refugees.

⁵ as published in "Outdoor Recreation and Nontraditional Users: Results of Focus Group Interviews With Racial and Ethnic Minorities"

This research helped public land managers understand Hmong cultural background, history and the needs of Hmong American recreationists and resulted in community partnerships focused on Hmong gathering non-timber forest products and use of traditional Hmong folk tales in conservation education.

These are only a few examples of how social science research is shaping the future of the US Forest Service and outdoor recreation experiences for all. The Agency's scientists and recreation planners continue to work on diversifying, expanding, and adapting recreation opportunities with the aim of increasing diversity among outdoor recreationists who are truly the next generation of stewards of sustainable land management.



SPOTLIGHT:

VISITORS CHRISTOPHER KASAYI AND PAUL KAVAVU FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND HOST TIM MURPHY, FIRE AND AVIATION SPECIALIST, AERIAL FIRE DEPOT, MISSOULA, MONTANA

"INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE IMPARTS KNOWLEDGE" by Andi Bourne (reprinted courtesy of the Seeley Swan Pathfinder, Montana)

"Wow, I'm going to the greatest country the world has ever had," thought Christopher Kasayi, a Health and Safety Officer and Instructor with the Working on Fire (WoF) Program in South Africa (SA), when he was chosen to come to the United States. Kasayi and Paul Kavavu, Instructor with WoF, are participants in the international exchange program between SA and the United States (SAUSA). They have been training at the Condon Work Center with the Great Northern Fire Crew for the past two weeks.



The SAUSA Program started in 2004. A total of 26 South Africans have participated in nine exchanges with the US Forest Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the New York City Fire Department. This is the fourth time the Great Northern has hosted SA trainers.

“A quarter of the world’s wildfires are in SA,” says Tim Murphy, Deputy Operations Specialist with Region I Fire and Aviation at the Missoula Smokejumper Base. “The main goal of the [exchange] program is to take lessons learned back to SA and incorporate them into the SA program [WoF].” WoF started in 2003 after 20 firefighters lost their lives in a grass (veld) fire in Kruger National Park. WoF has two main purposes: poverty relief and fire management including wildland and structural. WoF currently employs 5,000 personnel and has a rigorous training program from which Kasayi and Kavavu are a part of. “This has been the most powerful training that you can have with theory and practical [application] by the way they do things,” says Kasayi of the Great Northern training. “There is very powerful communication. Good communication makes a team and no one is left behind.”

Kasayi is from Jansenville, Eastern Cape in SA. With the program since its inception, he started out as a firefighter and worked his way up into his current position. Kavavu is originally from Angola and currently lives in Kathu, Northern Cape in SA. He started with WoF as a subcontract instructor and was hired as a WoF instructor in 2005. “The priorities are very straight forward here,” says Kasayi. “The safety aspect is more important than anything else.” Kasayi notes the difference in leadership styles. “There is more open leadership, it is more friendly here,” he says. “In SA ours [our leadership] is more military based. Firefighters are more afraid of their leaders. This [open leadership style] allows crews to be more adaptable to issues and

more flexible.” Kavavu also recognizes the distance between leaders and followers in SA and wants to change this distance especially with himself. “I am the oldest instructor,” says Kavavu. “They [firefighters] see me like a lion. They still have a fear of me. I want to make them free to me. Crew leaders and crew members must be approachable. There is individual leadership in America. Team members look after themselves and are self-motivated.” Kavavu goes on to explain how in SA crew members follow their crew leaders, waiting to act until they are directed. Kasayi is impressed with the Great Northern physical training (PT) program and how they use it primarily as a team building exercise, not punishment. “The trainers here implement what they teach,” says Kasayi. “They do everything the crew does.” Kavavu adds, “In SA instructors don’t do [work with the crew]. As instructors we must be willing to do PT with the crew.”

Kavavu is interested in how the US instructors train, in particular the women instructors. The SA culture is still male-dominated. Part of the requirements for SA government grants and funding includes a certain percentage of females in the work force. Kavavu struggles with his female instructors to get them to actively engage with the crew and to motivate them. “In the USA the female instructors are proud by themselves to do what they know and share it,” says Kavavu. “They share by doing, they don’t just tell but do.”

Carrie Johnson, Superintendent of the Great Northern Crew, enjoys hosting SA leaders in the exchange program. “They offer a different mind set on fire,” says Johnson. Kasayi and Kavavu gave a presentation on the nine different SA cultures, the firefighting culture, training structure and how they do things in SA. Communication and team cohesion are huge challenges. “It was really cool,” says Charlie Palermo, second-year crew member with the Great Northern. “They have adapted really well.” “In their talk about culture, they emphasized the struggles in their program,” says Johnson. “They pointed out how quickly we come together as a team.”

Along with imparting their knowledge about cultural differences in the SA fire culture, Kasayi and Kavavu hope to leave the Great Northern Crew with a few of their own leadership successes. “I want to bring music into their lives,” says Kasayi. “It encourages the team and teamwork.” South Africans sing while they work and sing while they run. “I want to teach them drilling,” says Kasayi. “Drilling is a part of discipline teaching crew members to take orders

from supervisors.” Drilling is a daily activity in the SA fire culture that is practiced, rehearsed and teams will even compete in. Although Kasayi and Kavavu spent most of their time in the USA training, they had a few days off to enjoy the area. They have been able to go fishing, explore Glacier National Park, lead worship at Faith Chapel in Seeley Lake, and experienced their first snow. Johnson is impressed and values the exchange of knowledge the program offers. “Their enthusiasm for everything, the snow, learning, it’s been great,” says Johnson. “All one needs to do to appreciate the program and what we have in the USA is to look into the visitors eyes and smiles and wonder what they cover,” says Murphy. “This has been a very rewarding program to both SA and the USA, as we take much more away in knowing and working with the SA folks.” “[This exchange] will allow me to expand more into the safety practical,” says Kasayi. “I can develop a good integration that will work [in SA].”

**WHAT’S NEW:
URBAN FORESTRY GOES
HIGH-TECH: i-Tree
Software Provides Tools to
Help Urban Forests Around
the World Thrive**

As the planet’s forests shrink due to the pressures of population growth, industry, urban sprawl, and a changing climate, urban forestry professionals are presenting new alternatives for incorporating more trees into cityscapes—to the benefit of local residents and the environment on a larger scale.

To help urban communities understand the importance of trees and better manage landscapes, Project Leader Dr. David Nowak of the US Forest Service Northern Research Station (NRS) has been working with partners across the US¹ and collaborators around to world to develop i-Tree, a state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed software suite that provides urban forestry analysis and benefits assessment tools. The

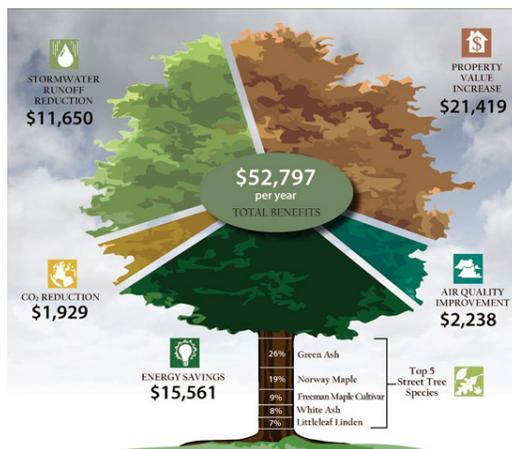
¹The Forest Service, Davey Tree Expert Company, National Arbor Day Foundation, Society of Municipal Arborists, International Society of Arboriculture, and Casey Trees have entered into a cooperative partnership to further develop, disseminate and provide technical support for the i-Tree suite.

i-Tree Tools help communities of all sizes to strengthen their urban forest management and advocacy efforts by quantifying the structure of community trees and the environmental services that trees provide. Since the initial release of the i-Tree Tools in August 2006, numerous communities, non-profit organizations, consultants, volunteers and students have used i-Tree to report on individual trees, parcels, neighborhoods, cities, and even entire states. To date there have been over 20,000 users of the tools in over 100 countries.

i-Tree contains several analysis tools. The core tool in i-Tree 5.0 (i-Tree Eco) allows users to get a broad picture of an entire area and gauge environmental effects by combining field inventory data with air quality and meteorological data. Another tool (i-Tree Hydro) measures the forest’s impact on a watershed’s stream flow and water quality. Other tools interface with the National Land Cover Database (NLCD) (i-Tree Vue), and even with Google maps (i-Tree Canopy and Design), to facilitate assessment and modeling of tree canopy cover and environmental services. Still another tool (i-Tree Streets) is designed to estimate the annual dollar value of the benefits provided by street trees in a municipality. Various other programs help determine the most appropriate tree species for planting in a certain area (i-Tree

Species), detect possible insect or disease problems in individual trees (i-Tree Pest Detection), and efficiently assess storm damage immediately after a severe weather event (i-Tree Storm).

In collaboration with the International Visitor Program, Dr. Nowak has welcomed several international interns and researchers to the NRS over the past several years to continue expanding the scope and impact of i-Tree. Findings from the dissertation of one visitor from Rome, Italy, are now being used to develop a drought routine for i-Tree. Other collaborative research studies involving students from France and Germany assessed the effects of tree cover on pollution in ten cities in Germany and France, and will result in the development of a version of i-Tree for use in Germany. A Colombian researcher is currently using i-Tree to analyze urban vegetation in two of Colombia’s largest cities.



His work and additional collaborations with researchers in Colombia will contribute to the development of a version of i-Tree for tropical areas. Versions of the software have already been released for use in Canada and Australia. Future development of i-Tree will focus on new features for measuring the impact of trees on air temperatures and ultraviolet radiation, human comfort, wildlife habitat, assessing ecosystem services and values using mapping technologies. Plans are in place to add functions for assessing tree population changes and projected effects over time, and for accessibility of some software features via mobile devices. New versions will also include capacity for landscape architects and school children to sketch and alter their local landscapes and view the impact of the changes.

By understanding the local, tangible ecosystem services that trees provide, i-Tree users can link urban forest management activities with environmental quality and community livability. Whether a user's interest is a single tree or an entire forest, i-Tree provides baseline data that can be used to demonstrate value and set priorities for more effective urban planning and environmentally responsible decision-making in the United States and abroad.

For more information or to access the model, visit www.itreetools.org.

CULTURE CORNER **TRICK OR TREAT! IT'S HALLOWEEN!**

If you've ever wondered why American children dress up in costumes and go door to door asking for candy by calling out "Trick or Treat" on the night of October 31, you're not alone. Many Americans don't even know the origins of American Halloween customs and celebrations. If you ask around, you'll hear about certain traditions, superstitions or symbols like Trick or Treating, costume parties, bobbing for apples, candy corn, haunted houses, Jack O'Lanterns, ghosts and goblins, witches, cats and bats, orange and black, bonfires, and "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Flip on the television in October and you're certain to see a long lineup of Hollywood Halloween horror films. Some American friends might even tell you about teenage pranks or "tricks" from their youth like toilet papering houses or egging cars. But, for good reason, few will be able explain exactly why it is we carve pumpkins or what bats have to do with Halloween.



Halloween has evolved over the years as our nation has – as a rich conglomeration of cultures, folklore and history that has emerged as something uniquely “American.” The autumn celebration is anchored in ancient customs and immigrant folklore that have been transformed into an enjoyable, secular and very commercial holiday. Halloween, which is starting to spread around the globe, now comes in second to Christmas in generating the largest holiday sales revenues for retailers and on-line vendors.

Behind the bags of candy on store shelves and the scary costumes are some very interesting pagan rituals, Christian rites, and folklore from many cultures. Halloween dates back over 2000 years to ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in) which was celebrated on the night of October 31, the Celt's new year's eve. November 1st marked the end of harvest, summer and the old year and the beginning of winter, a season associated with death. The Celts believe that on this night, the worlds of the living and the dead overlapped as the ghosts of the dead returned. The Celtic Priests, or Druids, built huge bonfires in which animals and crops were sacrificed by Celts wearing costumes in an attempt to mimic or appease evil spirits. It's thought that bats found their way into the symbolism because they flew close to the ritual grounds to eat the insects that were drawn to the bonfires. The superstition about having bad luck if you cross the path of a black cat probably came from the medieval belief that witches avoided detection by turning themselves into cats.

After the Romans came to rule Celtic territories, Samhain became intertwined with Roman harvest festivals and the Catholic feast of “All-Hallows” or “All-hallowmas” now known as All Saints' Day. The night of Samhain came to be called “All-Hallows Eve,” and later, “Halloween.” Many Irish and English folk traditions developed over many hundreds of years and were later brought to the US by immigrants who settled here in the late 1800s.

Please Share Your Stories!

We would like to invite everyone to share photos and stories about yourselves, your programs, and the exchange experiences you've had in the United States and abroad. Please submit your stories, pictures, ideas, and feedback to Emily Betz at eebetzclose@fs.fed.us.

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Disclaimer

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Trick-or-treating is what defines Halloween for most. What is now a festive community-oriented activity might be attributed to a medieval tradition of "souling," when the poor went door to door on Hallowmas (Nov. 1) to receive food in exchange for saying prayers for the dead on All Souls Day (Nov. 2). In England, the church promoted the distribution of "soul cakes" during All Souls' Day parades as a way of replacing ancient practices of leaving offerings of food and wine for wandering spirits. In Latin America and Spain, a 3-day celebration honoring the dead begins on October 31 and leads up to the "Day of the Dead" or All Souls' Day. Homes are decorated with candy, candles and flowers and most families clean and visit the gravesites of their deceased relatives.



The Halloween tradition of carving a frightening face in a pumpkin to make a Jack O'Lantern is also a popular family activity. This practice was spun from a folktale about 'Stingy Jack,' a shady character who was banned from hell and left in Purgatory as his punishment for outwitting the devil while bargaining for his soul. Jack was sent on his way in the dark of night with only a glowing coal in a turnip to light his way. Hence, a Jack of the Lantern, or Jack O'Lantern, that was carved from a turnip, potato or beet and placed in a window or near a door to frighten away Stingy Jack and other evil spirits became a popular decoration. Immigrants brought the tradition with them to the US, but began making Jack O'Lanterns from pumpkins, a native fruit of the Americas.

Today's rich mixture of culture and customs and a bit of fantasy, fun, and superstition are what make Halloween such a festive holiday. If you will be home on Halloween, be prepared! It's always good to have candy on hand to reward a "Trick or Treat."

ON THE HORIZON

US Holidays and Special Occasions

Monday, September 2	Labor Day (Federal Government closed)
Wednesday, September 11	Patriot Day
Friday, September 27	Native American Day
Monday, October 14	Columbus Day (Federal Government closed)
Thursday, October 31	Halloween
Sunday, November 3	Daylight Savings Time ends (turn clocks back 1 hour)
Monday, November 11	Veterans' Day
Thursday, November 28	Thanksgiving (Federal Government closed)

If you are a visitor to the US, ask your American hosts, friends and colleagues how they celebrate these holidays.

Hosts, we encourage you to use this opportunity to share an aspect of American culture with your visitor(s)!