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# BLOGS & STORIES

## The Best Cities for Trick-or-Treating

by *Richard Florida*

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**You may have your costume already picked out, but how does your city rate for celebrating Halloween? Richard Florida crunched the numbers for the ultimate list of the best cities to collect candy. Plus, the most fattening Halloween candy.**

With Halloween just around the corner, you probably don't have time to move to a different city to improve your (or your kids') candy haul. But you may be lucky to already live in one of the best cities for trick-or-treating all ready. We crunched the numbers to come up with a list of the best cities to be when the costumes come out.

Bridgeport-Stamford, Connecticut takes top spot on our "Trick-or-Treater Index" followed by LA, NYC, Chicago and DC. Boston, the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, Trenton-Ewing, New Jersey, and greater Philadelphia round out the top ten. The Bay Area makes the grade, Portland and Seattle in the Northwest, Baltimore, San Diego and Honolulu are all among the top twenty. And smaller communities like college towns Boulder and Ann Arbor, and Lancaster Pennsylvania close out the list.

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The idea for the Trick-or-Treater Index came to me several years ago, right after my wife and I spent our first Halloween in Toronto and I wrote about it in my Who's Your City?. I'd lived in many urban neighborhoods in the United States in New York, Boston, DC, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and Buffalo, and frankly never seen many trick-or-treaters. Maybe I lived in the wrong kind of places—perhaps too trendy when I was younger or perhaps a bit too far removed from the beaten track as I got older. But it could have been something else too. Because of real or imagined dangers in urban communities many parents don't let their kids go up to houses where they don't know the people, and are more likely to create supervised parties or trick-or-treating rituals for their kids. Nearly half of all children in the United States live in places where their parents fear that neighbours may be a bad influence, and more than one in five are kept indoors because they live in dangerous neighbourhoods according to a 2007 Census study reported in the New York Times. But our house in Toronto is always mobbed with kids trick-or-treating from teeny tots to tweens and teens, many of them going it on their own without parents along to supervise. And our house was not in some far-off suburb, but rather in residential neighborhood of older single-family homes about two miles from downtown. I later learned that Catherine Austin Fitts, a former assistant secretary of Housing and Urban Development, came up with a similar index—the Popsicle Index—which she describes as the percentage of people in a community who feel that a child can leave home safely to buy a Popsicle.

Our Trick-or-Treater Index is based on five criteria. A good place for trick-or-treating needs lots of kids, so we used the percentage of children aged 5 to 14. The haul is likely to be better where people have more money, so we included the median household income. It's easier to canvass neighborhoods that are walkable so we measured as the share of people who walk to work—and also those that have a greater density of population. And then there's that hard-to-miss Halloween spirit. The most over-the-top costumes and celebrations often occur in artistic neighborhoods, so we included the fraction of artists, designers, and other cultural creatives. The Trick-or-Treater Index covers all 300 plus US metros and includes both their core cities and suburbs.

- Most Fattening Halloween

Our Index differs from the interesting and fun Zillow Trick-or-Treat Index which combines Zillow data on home values, walkability from

## Candy

Walk Score, population density and crime rates. Many of the same communities make both lists, though the ordering is different. While ours covers a much larger range of metros, the terrific Zillow team is able to zero in on best trick-or-treating neighbourhoods in the metros it covers.

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Gallery: [View the Best Cities for Halloween](#)

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*[Charlotta Mellander](#) crunched the numbers*

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