Halloween treats kids can make themselves, by age, with allergy swaps

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Easy Halloween treats kids can make themselves, from banana ghosts to dirt cups, how to roast pumpkin seeds together, allergy swaps, candy labels and choking notes.

Most Halloween treats a child can make are put together, not cooked: peel, snap, spread, stack, sprinkle, and give it eyes. That's why they suit kids so well. Eight of the fourteen treats in Peabody's Spooky Kitchen need no oven, stove or toaster, and a kindergartner can do nearly every step. For the other six, a grown-up does the hot part and the child does the rest. Below: what kids can make themselves, by age; how to roast pumpkin seeds together; the bits of math hiding in the recipes; and the allergy, candy-label and choking notes that matter at Halloween.

I'm a parent who built Peabody, a free reading and math site. A week ago I added the Kitchen, step-by-step recipes read aloud by a tiny chef called Crumb, and this week it got a Spooky Kitchen: fourteen Halloween treats, all on the Halloween treats for kids page. Like every Kitchen recipe, they're free through the end of 2026, with no ads, no sign-up and no AI in them.

What "make it themselves" looks like

A child can do most of a recipe on their own when the counter is set up for it. A few things help:

- Get everything out first. All the food, a plate or tray each, a butter knife, a damp cloth for sticky fingers.
- Do your cuts before you start. If a recipe has a grown-up step with a sharp knife (halving grapes, coring an apple, cutting celery into tiny stems), do it first, then step back.
- One step at a time. Each Kitchen recipe shows one picture and one sentence per step, and Crumb reads it aloud, so a child who isn't reading yet can still follow along. Before any hot or sharp step, Crumb says to stop and get a grown-up.
- Let it look homemade. A ghost with one eye bigger than the other is still a ghost.

No-cook Halloween treats a 5-year-old can make

These eight need no heat at all. The only grown-up jobs are a few cuts with a sharp knife, done before the child starts.

- Treat: Banana ghosts · What the child does: Peels, halves with a butter knife, stands them up, adds chocolate chip eyes · What a grown-up does: Nothing

- Treat: Clementine pumpkins · What the child does: Peels the clementines, pokes in celery "stems", counts the segments · What a grown-up does: Cuts the celery into tiny sticks
- Treat: Spider crackers · What the child does: Snaps pretzels into legs, spreads, sandwiches, adds raisin eyes · What a grown-up does: Nothing
- Treat: Witch's broomsticks · What the child does: Cuts string cheese with a butter knife, pulls it into bristles, pushes in pretzel handles · What a grown-up does: Nothing
- Treat: Graveyard dirt cups · What the child does: Spoons pudding, bashes cookies in a bag with a rolling pin, wiggles in gummy worms · What a grown-up does: Nothing
- Treat: Candy corn fruit cups · What the child does: Layers pineapple, clementine and yogurt into stripes · What a grown-up does: Nothing
- Treat: Apple monster mouths · What the child does: Spreads, adds marshmallow teeth and a strawberry tongue · What a grown-up does: Slices and cores the apple
- Treat: Witch's brew punch · What the child does: Freezes the grape "eyeballs", pours, scoops in sherbet, stirs and says a spell · What a grown-up does: Halves every grape the long way

The dirt cups' cookie bashing is the job kids fight over, so it's worth having a bag each.

With a grown-up at the oven, stove or toaster

These six have hot steps, which stay a grown-up's whatever the child's age. The child still does most of the making.

- Ghost toast: you toast the bread; they wait a minute, spread a cream cheese ghost and press on raisin eyes.
- Mummy pizzas: they pull English muffins apart, spread sauce and lay string cheese "bandages" crisscross; you bake them at 400°F for 8 minutes and take them out.
- Mummy dogs: they cut crescent dough into strips and wrap the hot dogs, then wash their hands again (raw dough isn't for licking); you bake them.
- Jack-o'-lantern quesadillas: they scratch a face on a tortilla with a toothpick and sprinkle the cheese; you cut the face out and cook them. The orange cheese glows through the face.
- Pumpkin muffins: they measure, whisk, crack the egg (then wash their hands) and fill the cups about ? full; you bake them. No tasting the batter until it's baked.
- Roasted pumpkin seeds: below.

How to roast pumpkin seeds with kids

If you're carving a pumpkin this week, the seeds are a free snack, and most of the work is a child's.

1. A grown-up cuts the lid. (Carving first? The Pumpkin Patch has stencils and the kid and

grown-up jobs for carving, and there's a whole post on how to carve a pumpkin with kids.)
2. Scoop it out with a big spoon, then pull the seeds out of the stringy goop with your fingers.
3. Rinse the seeds in a colander under cold water.
4. Pat them really dry with a clean towel. This is the step that makes them crunchy: the water has to steam away before the seeds can crisp up.
5. A grown-up heats the oven to 325°F and lines a tray with baking paper.
6. Toss the seeds with a little oil and salt in a bowl, then spread them flat in one layer.
7. A grown-up roasts them for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring halfway, until golden, and takes them out with oven mitts.
8. Let them cool for 10 minutes. They crisp up more as they cool.

For a sweet batch, swap the salt for cinnamon and a little sugar. Before they go in the oven, count them: lay them out in tens and see how many one pumpkin held. Pumpkin seeds are a choking risk for children under 4, so little brothers and sisters get a different snack.

The bits of math in the treats

Several of these recipes have a small math question built in, and kids notice them more when they're about to eat the answer.

- Spider crackers: a spider has 8 legs, so 4 on each side: 4 + 4 = 8. Count them before the crunch.
- Clementine pumpkins: pull one apart and count the segments. Is it 8? 10? Is every clementine the same?
- Banana ghosts: each banana makes two ghosts. Four bananas, how many ghosts?
- Roasted pumpkin seeds: count them in groups of ten.
- Pumpkin muffins: filling cups ? full, and the measuring cups themselves, are fractions.

There's more in kitchen math: fractions in recipes and Halloween math and reading at home.

Allergies and Halloween candy: read the label

The FDA names nine major food allergens that US labels must declare: milk, egg, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy and sesame. In the Kitchen, tap "Allergies?" and pick one, and each treat fills in a swap where there's an honest one:

- sunflower seed butter instead of peanut butter (apple monster mouths) or cream cheese (spider crackers)
- gluten-free pretzels, crackers and bread
- oat yogurt and oat milk
- corn tortillas, and oil instead of butter, for the quesadillas
- raisins instead of chocolate chips

There's no honest swap for string cheese or chocolate pudding, so the Kitchen doesn't offer one. And every candy and packet food in the Spooky Kitchen (gummy worms, candy eyes, candy corn, cookies, pudding, crescent dough, hot dogs) carries "read the label", because what's in them changes from brand to brand.

The same goes for the trick-or-treat haul. The American Academy of Pediatrics' Halloween safety tips point out that candy made in a facility that also handles allergens can still cause a reaction, and suggest non-food treats. FARE's Teal Pumpkin Project asks households to offer non-food treats (stickers, small toys) in a separate bowl and put a teal pumpkin out to say so. A family managing a serious allergy should follow their doctor's plan and read every label, every time.

Little ones under 4

Brothers and sisters eat the treats too. The AAP lists foods that are choking risks for young children until at least age 4, and several are Halloween regulars: hot dogs, whole grapes, marshmallows, hard, gooey or sticky candy, popcorn, nuts and seeds, and chunks of cheese. Each Spooky Kitchen recipe carries the line for what's in it:

- Grapes are halved the long way. In the witch's brew, a grown-up halves them for everyone.
- Hot dogs are cut into thin strips the long way, never round coins.
- String cheese is pulled into thin strips, not chunks.
- Marshmallows, gummy worms, candy corn and candy eyes are left off for them.
- Pumpkin seeds go to the big kids.

The AAP's Halloween tips add hard candy, caramel apples, gum and small candies to the list to keep from babies and toddlers when the trick-or-treat bags come home.

Putting together a Halloween party table

For a small party made mostly by the kids, pick one from each: a drink (witch's brew punch, with the grape eyeballs frozen the night before), something savory (mummy pizzas or no-cook spider crackers), something fruity (banana ghosts or clementine pumpkins) and something sweet (dirt cups, which keep in the fridge for a few hours). The Halloween treats for kids page has the full table with times and ages, and Halloween HQ has everything else Halloween at Peabody. When the cooking's done, the free library has spooky-cute stories to read while the muffins bake.

Questions parents ask

What Halloween treats can kids make by themselves?

Banana ghosts, spider crackers, witch's broomsticks, candy corn fruit cups and graveyard dirt cups need no knife beyond a butter knife and no heat at all, so a kindergartner can make them with a grown-up nearby. Clementine pumpkins, apple monster mouths and witch's brew punch need a grown-up for one cut first.

What are easy Halloween treats for a class party?

The no-cook fruit ones travel well: clementine pumpkins and candy corn fruit cups. Check your school's food rules first; many have allergy policies, and some don't allow homemade food at all.

How do you get roasted pumpkin seeds crunchy?

Rinse off all the pulp, pat the seeds really dry, spread them in one layer and roast them low, at 325°F for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring halfway. They crisp up more as they cool.

Are dirt cups OK for toddlers?

Leave the gummy worms off for children under 4, since gummy candy is a choking risk. The rest is soft pudding and cookie crumbs; check the labels for milk, wheat and soy.

Is the Kitchen free?

Yes. The Kitchen and the Spooky Kitchen are free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up. The allergy picks stay on your device.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/halloween-treats-kids-can-make