The Day of the Dead

Hello, everyone! It's that time of year when your friendly ALT talks about Halloween, just like the year before! Well, Halloween is my favorite holiday! Part of the reason that I love Halloween so much is that my mom is from Ireland, where Halloween originally came from.

It's believed that Halloween began around 4,000 BC, making it 6,000 years old! It was first a Celtic (an old Irish) festival, called Samhain (pronounced サヴァウン). The festival celebrated the end of summer and the beginning of winter. To help the community survive the cold winter, a huge feast(宴会) was held and large bonfires(かがり火) were lit on Halloween.

Because summer was life and winter was death, they believed that this day was special. They believed that the souls(魂) of the dead could return to earth on Halloween. Food and gifts were left out for the dead that returned home and families joined together for a feast. To protect themselves from angry souls, people were dress up like spirits(幽霊). This way, the angry spirits didn't know who they were! Food, drinks, and treats(ごちそう) were left to calm the angry spirits, as well. Since no one knew who was a real spirit and who was a living person, the people in costumes would go around the neighborhood and collect some of the treats!

Many countries don't celebrate Halloween, though. In Mexico, parts of Latin America, and Spain, there is a three-day celebration that starts on October 31st. It's called Dia de los Muertos, which is Spanish for the Day of the Dead. Like Halloween, the celebration honors the dead who return home. People paint their faces like skeletons and dress in bright colors. Families make an altar(祭壇) with plates of food, drinks, candy, and photos of their relatives to celebrate.

Interesting, isn't it? I hope you all enjoy this year's Halloween and watch out for(〜に用心する) angry spirits!