



RFM Financial
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By the numbers: Halloween

In the United States, holidays encourage consumers to spend on decorations, food, activities, and other items. With its emphasis on buying candy and costumes, the Halloween season coerces consumers to open their wallets to celebrate. Let us take a look at how Americans celebrate Halloween and how it impacts the economy.



\$86.13

The average amount that an American will spend on Halloween-related items



\$9.1 billion

The anticipated amount that Americans will spend on Halloween-specific items



179 million

The total number of Americans planning to celebrate Halloween



\$3.4 billion

The anticipated amount that Americans will spend on costumes



16 percent

Amount of Americans dressing up their pets

The market at a glance

September

■ U.S. Large Cap (S&P 500)	2,519.36 (1.93%) ▲
■ U.S. Mid/Small (Russell 2000)	1,490.86 (6.09%) ▲
■ International Large (NYSE International 100)	5,643.00 (2.25%) ▲
■ U.S. Treasuries (U.S. 10-year Treasury yield rate)	2.33 (9.91%) ▲



The market in action

- In one of the biggest data breaches of all time, Equifax, one of the three major credit reporting agencies in the United States, announced that more than 143 million individuals had their information compromised. The hack reportedly occurred from May through July of this year.
- The devastating hurricanes that impacted much of the Americas in August and September continue to impact millions of people. Estimates indicate that, between Hurricanes Irma and Harvey, total combined damage could exceed \$400 billion.
- Controlling stake in the storied music publication company Rolling Stone has been made available by Wenner Media LLC. According to Kreisky Media Consultancy, the stake could go for as much as \$80 million.
- Amazon is looking to expand its operations to a second headquarters office. Amazon estimates that, from 2010 through 2016, their main headquarters impacted Seattle's economy to the tune of roughly \$38 billion. Amazon expects to announce their decision sometime in 2018.
- Nordstrom is set to implement a line of stores that will have no merchandise for sale. Starting in early October at locations in California, these "Nordstrom Local" stores will have items that can be tried on, but not purchased. Instead, inventory will be gathered from other stores and from its own website. These stores will also have "bars" that offer juice and wine.
- In a promising sign for working-class families in the United States, middle-class income for Americans in 2016 rose to the highest it has ever been. In relation to this news, the poverty rate dropped to 12.7 percent, roughly returning to pre-recession levels.



The economic impact of natural disasters

In August and September, Hurricanes Harvey and Irma ravaged various parts of the Western hemisphere. The devastation, from the loss of life to the damage to infrastructure, is nearly inconceivable. According to figures reported by The Guardian and The Los Angeles Times, these two hurricanes will end up costing approximately \$400 billion in combined damage.

Given these recent events, let us examine some of the costliest natural disasters in recent history and how they impacted economies.

2011 - Earthquake and tsunami in Japan

In a level of nearly unprecedented devastation, Tohoku, Japan experienced the fourth most powerful earthquake since 1900, which incited a tsunami. Thousands of people died, tens of thousands were evacuated, and hundreds of thousands were left without electricity or running water. The cost of the event was estimated to be \$235 billion, the costliest natural disaster in recorded history.

2005 - Hurricane Katrina

Currently the costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States, Hurricane Katrina saw far-reaching damage. In addition to the damage done to infrastructure in the American South,

19 percent of American oil production was impacted by the hurricane. Ultimately, some experts estimated that the total damage exceeded \$100 billion.

2008 - Sichuan earthquake

In one of the most devastating disasters to affect Asia, a large area of China was affected by a massive earthquake that was felt by several surrounding countries. Hundreds of thousands were either injured or killed as a result of the earthquake. Following the disaster, Chinese state media reported that the government would face a repair bill of roughly \$150 billion.

2012 - Hurricane Sandy

In 2012, the American Northeast was hit with a hurricane the likes of which the region had not seen in years – or maybe ever. Hundreds of thousands of homes and cars were damaged or destroyed and led to the deaths of more than 150 individuals. Ultimately, the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy is estimated to have exceeded \$65 billion, making it the second-costliest natural disaster in American history.

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