

5 DIY HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS IN 20 MINUTES



1. A SWARM OF PAPER BATS

20 minutes • Easy • Renter-friendly • page 2



2. A SPOOKY BLACK BRANCH TREE

20 minutes + drying • Easy • Almost free • page 3



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4. APOTHECARY JARS

15–20 minutes • Easy • Uses what you have • page 5



5. A HAUNTED MIRROR MESSAGE

5–10 minutes • Very easy • Wipes off in seconds • page 6

Bonus printables: bat template (page 7) and apothecary jar labels (page 8)

A SWARM OF PAPER BATS

🕒 20 minutes

Easy

Renter-friendly

YOU NEED

- ☐ 3–4 sheets of black cardstock
- ☐ A pencil (white or silver shows best on black)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Removable mounting putty or painter's tape
- ☐ The bat template on page 7



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Print the bat template at 100% and cut out the three bat shapes to use as stencils.
- 2 Trace them onto the black cardstock: about 8 large, 10 medium and 12 small bats.
- 3 Cut them out. Small, sharp scissors make the wing points much cleaner.
- 4 Fold each bat gently along the body so the wings lift off the wall and cast a shadow.
- 5 Plan the path: start at a lamp, mirror or door frame with the large bats and let them get smaller as they "fly" away in a curved line.
- 6 Stick each bat with a small ball of putty on the body only, so the wings stay free. Step back, check the spacing and adjust.

TIP Put a lamp below the swarm: the shadows double the effect. In November, store the bats flat in a folder so they last for years.

A SPOOKY BLACK BRANCH TREE

⌚ 20 minutes + drying

Easy

Almost free

YOU NEED

- ☐ 3–5 bare, dry branches, 18–30 inches long
- ☐ A tall, heavy vase or jar
- ☐ Stones, sand or dried beans to weigh it down
- ☐ Matte black spray paint (optional)
- ☐ Small hanging decorations: paper bats, mini pumpkins, old keys
- ☐ Twine or thin ribbon



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Pick branches with lots of small twigs: the more "fingers", the spookier the tree. Shake and brush off dirt and loose bark.
- 2 If you want them black, spray paint outside or in a well-ventilated space over cardboard, and let them dry completely.
- 3 Fill the vase two-thirds with stones or beans so it doesn't tip over.
- 4 Push in the tallest branch in the center, then the others around it, leaning slightly outward.
- 5 Hang decorations with twine, more on the lower branches than at the top.
- 6 Optional: wrap a battery string light around the branches.

TIP After Halloween, take the decorations off and keep the branches for fall, or paint them white for winter.

CHEESECLOTH GHOSTS

⌚ 20 minutes + overnight drying

Easy

Great with kids

YOU NEED

- ☐ Cheesecloth, about 1 yard per ghost
- ☐ A balloon or a foam ball
- ☐ A bottle or jar to use as a stand
- ☐ Fabric stiffener, or white glue mixed 1:1 with water
- ☐ A bowl and plastic wrap to protect the table
- ☐ Black felt or paper for the eyes



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Cover the table with plastic wrap. Stand the bottle on it and put the balloon or ball on top: that is the ghost's head.
- 2 Cut a square of cheesecloth, about 24 by 24 inches.
- 3 Pour the stiffener (or glue and water) into the bowl and soak the cheesecloth. Squeeze out the excess.
- 4 Drape the wet cloth over the head and let it fall around the bottle. Pinch and pull it into folds so it looks like it is floating.
- 5 Leave it to dry overnight, until it is stiff.
- 6 Remove the bottle, pop or pull out the balloon, and glue on two black eyes and an oval mouth.

TIP Put a battery tea light inside: the ghost glows from within. Never use a real candle.

APOTHECARY JARS

⌚ 15–20 minutes

Easy

Uses what you have

YOU NEED

- ☐ 3–5 glass jars or bottles of different heights
- ☐ Fillers: dried black beans, lentils, pumpkin seeds, cotton balls, plastic spiders, feathers, water with a drop of food coloring
- ☐ The printable labels on page 8
- ☐ A glue stick or double-sided tape
- ☐ Twine



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Wash the jars and soak off old labels in warm, soapy water.
- 2 Fill each jar to match a label: black beans for "Bat Wings", green lentils for "Eye of Newt", cotton balls with plastic spiders for "Spider Eggs", green-tinted water for "Witch's Brew".
- 3 Cut out the labels. For an old look, tear the edges slightly or rub them with a damp tea bag and let them dry.
- 4 Glue the labels on and tie a piece of twine around each neck.
- 5 Group them in odd numbers on a tray or a shelf, tallest at the back, with an LED candle in front.

TIP Don't use food you plan to eat, and keep small fillers away from toddlers and pets.

A HAUNTED MIRROR MESSAGE

⌚ 5–10 minutes

Very easy

Wipes off in seconds

YOU NEED

- ☐ A mirror, ideally in an entryway or bathroom
- ☐ A red or black dry-erase marker, or a bar of soap
- ☐ Glass cleaner and a soft cloth
- ☐ Optional: plastic spiders and an LED candle



STEP BY STEP

- 1 Clean the mirror well. Marker slides on dust and streaks.
- 2 Test the marker in a corner to make sure it wipes off your mirror.
- 3 Choose your message: "LOOK BEHIND YOU", "YOU'RE NEXT", "GET OUT" or, for little kids, a friendly "BOO!".
- 4 Write in big, shaky capital letters. Then add drips: from the bottom of some letters, drag the marker straight down.
- 5 Add a few plastic spiders on the frame and an LED candle below, so the light hits the words from underneath.
- 6 To remove it, wipe with a dry cloth first, then glass cleaner.

TIP Never use permanent marker, and test first on antique or coated mirrors.

BAT TEMPLATE

Print at 100% (no "fit to page"). Cut out each bat, trace it onto black cardstock and cut. Make about 8 large, 10 medium and 12 small bats.



LARGE



MEDIUM



SMALL

APOTHECARY JAR LABELS

Cut along the dashed lines. For an aged look, tear the edges or dab with a damp tea bag and let dry. The filler under each name matches project 4.

No. 01 · EST. 1692

BAT WINGS

Dried black beans

No. 02 · EST. 1692

EYE OF NEWT

Green lentils

No. 03 · EST. 1692

SPIDER EGGS

Cotton balls + spiders

No. 04 · EST. 1692

WITCH'S BREW

Green-tinted water

No. 05 · EST. 1692

DRAGON SCALES

Pumpkin seeds

No. 06 · EST. 1692

RAVEN FEATHERS

Black feathers