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HABIT NOW

BANGKOK HALLOWEEN 2026
A CIVA CASE STUDY

TRADITIONS TRANSLATED

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INSIGHTS THAT TRAVEL | STRATEGIES THAT LAND

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A FAMILIAR IDEA TRAVELS?

HALLOWEEN 2026 IN BANGKOK

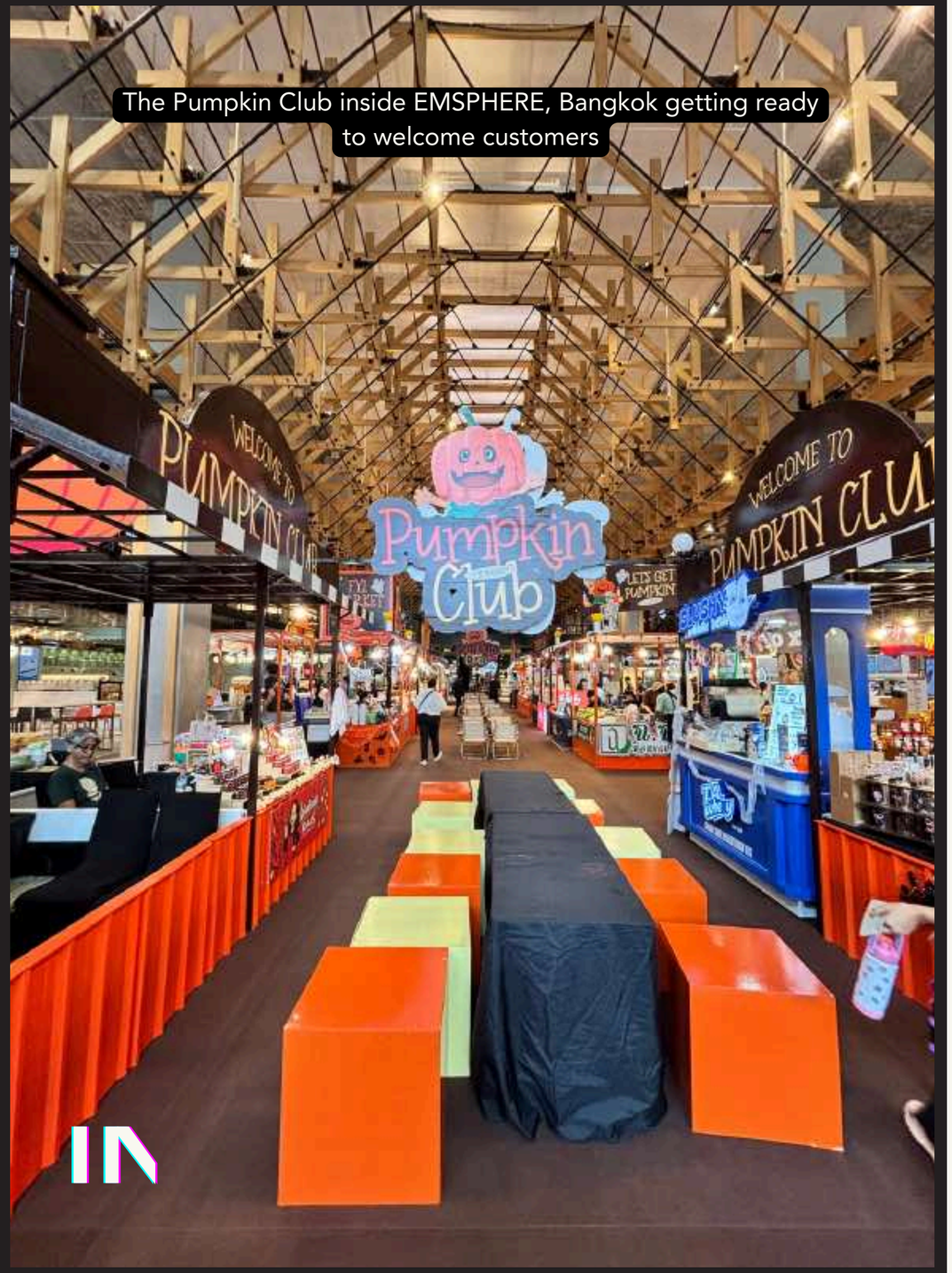
The giant ghost outside a shopping mall tells you straight away that it's Halloween. Inside a department store a costume competition gives children somewhere to show off their outfits.

But in suburban neighbourhoods, no houses are decorated and there's no evidence of doorstep trick-or-treating. It seems to be a normal warm day at the end of October.

Welcome to Halloween in Bangkok – where the imagery may be familiar to people in the West, but some behaviours are quite different.

Differences like this matter when a business takes a brand, product or campaign into a new market. People might recognise the idea straight away. Will they use it in the same way? What gives them a reason to join in? What might the local market add?





The Pumpkin Club inside EMSPHERE, Bangkok getting ready to welcome customers

USING CIVA TO MAP THE JOURNEY

A PRACTICAL CASE STUDY

Halloween makes those questions easy to see. A pumpkin, a costume and a doorstep ritual are all parts of the same occasion, and each can travel differently. This case study draws on observations, interviews and conversations in Bangkok around Halloween 2026. Familiar UK and US traditions provide points of comparison.

HABIT NOW's Cultural Insight Viability Assessment (CIVA) helps teams understand how an idea works in another market.

It starts with what people recognise and what it means to them, then looks at how they take part and what makes that possible. Three questions guide the comparison:

- **What Holds?**
- **What Shifts?**
- **What Breaks?**

WHAT HOLDS

Halloween icons travel well
Carved pumpkins and classic white-sheet ghosts kept turning up in Bangkok. They appeared in everything from small café displays to giant inflatables outside malls. Skeletons were another familiar sight, alongside characters like Wednesday Addams and Pennywise the Clown. They fit the occasion because they already belong to the world of horror.

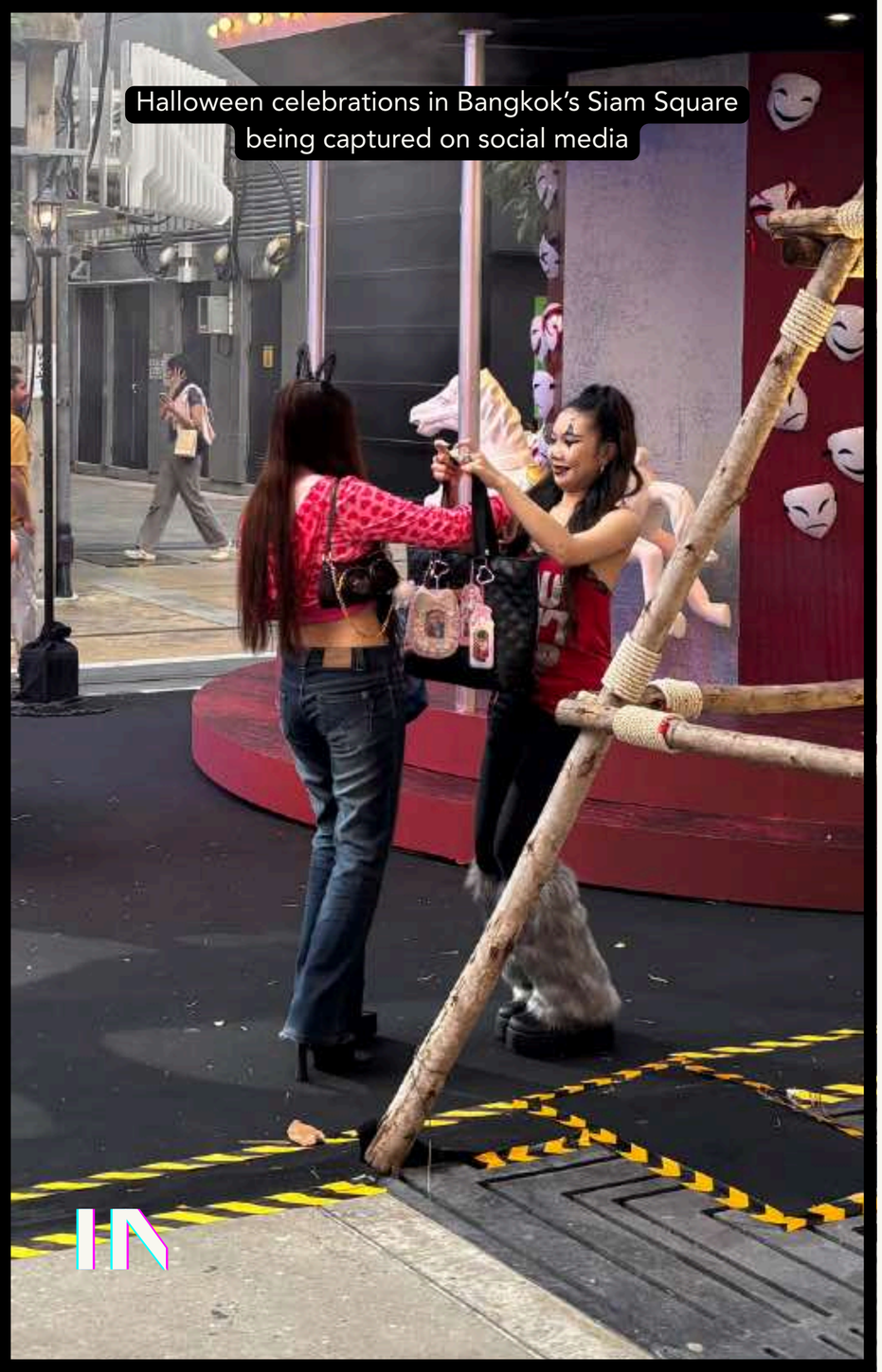
Dressing up gives people a way to join in
Halloween in Bangkok saw toddlers dressed as pumpkins, teenagers in elaborate cosplay and people heading out with spiderwebs, cuts and bruises painted on their faces. Harry Potter could be part of the same night as a nun or a zombie. The looks varied across different venues, but the invitation was familiar. For one night, you could go out as someone else.

A good scare still works
Halloween gives people a chance to enjoy being scared, up to a point. At a mall's Haunted Walk, the route led through a dark space with sound effects and actors waiting to make visitors jump. The stories came from Thailand, and the fun of a good scare was easy to recognise.

Businesses have a date to build around
Halloween gives businesses a date to put something on. Malls can build a display or run an event. Shops can dress their windows or put on a promotion. Bars can give people a reason to get together for a themed night.



The pumpkin image is prevalent in almost all locations were Halloween is being celebrated



WHAT SHIFTS

Where you go changes how you dress up
A mall costume competition gave children somewhere to show off their outfits. At several nightclubs, security required masks to come off at the door. A painted spiderweb, fake cuts or a full zombie look gave people a way to stay in costume with their faces visible.

Familiar outings get a Halloween twist
The Halloween funfair had the usual children's activities and food stalls. The decorations gave it a seasonal look. In the bars, Thriller could bring out the theme alongside familiar party tracks like YMCA and Titanium.

The mood can be more carnival than graveyard
In Britain, Halloween comes with darkening evenings and images of mist and graveyards. Some displays in Bangkok borrowed that look, even on warm evenings. At Siam Square, the imagery also drew on old carnival sideshows, including a bearded lady. It gave Halloween a more theatrical feel, with room for the weird and wonderful alongside the macabre.

Thai stories give the ghosts a different role
The bilingual boards outside the Haunted Walk introduced the stories featured inside. One linked a haunting to karma and the consequences of a woman's actions after death. Another told of a spirit guarding hidden royal treasure in Ayutthaya. The jump scares were familiar (and effective!). The stories gave the ghosts their own reasons for being there.

The theme makes it onto the plate
D'ARK's October-only Vampire's Gaze was a coconut panna cotta with an eyeball garnish and red berry sauce that looked like blood. The Halloween theme made it all the way to the plate.

WHAT BREAKS

Door-to-door trick-or-treating drops out
Door-to-door trick-or-treating was the clearest break. There were children in costume in the Bangkok settings covered by the fieldwork, but the routine of knocking on neighbours' doors for sweets was missing. In a neighbourhood that goes trick-or-treating, a pumpkin by the door can mean "you're welcome to knock". In Bangkok, pumpkins in shops and malls marked the occasion.

That changes who makes Halloween happen. Going door to door gives children, parents and neighbours a part to play. Much of the celebration visible in Bangkok was organised by malls, bars and other venues. Children could enter a costume competition or go to a fair, with the organisers providing the place and the activity.

People know the occasion better than its backstory
In conversations about Halloween, people readily made the link with ghosts and scares. There was less to say about where it came from or what it marked. A concert, a costume competition or a night out could still give people a reason to join in.



Haunted-house cut-outs inside SPOOKY ENCHIN, ENHYPEN's Halloween pop-up at Siam Paragon, Bangkok.


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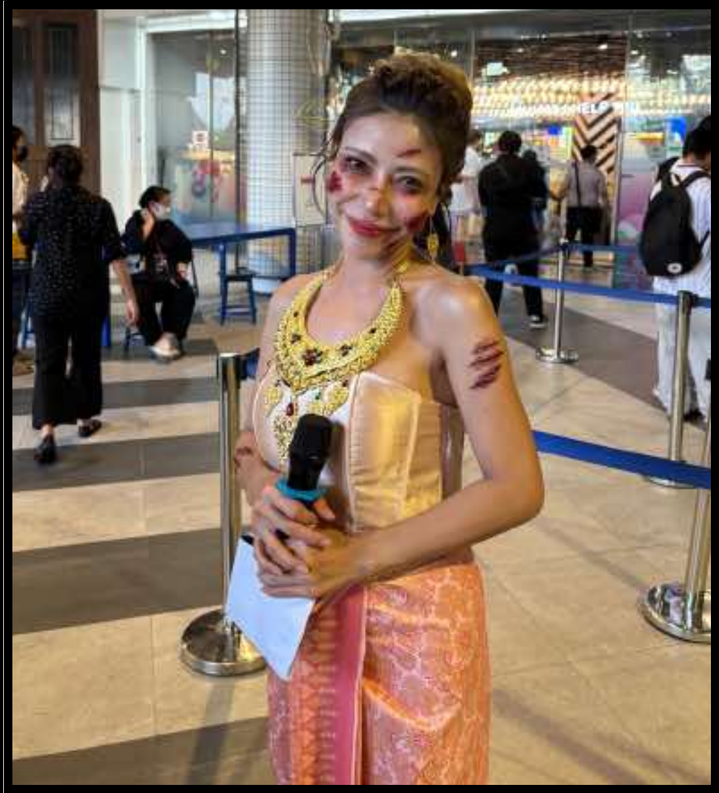


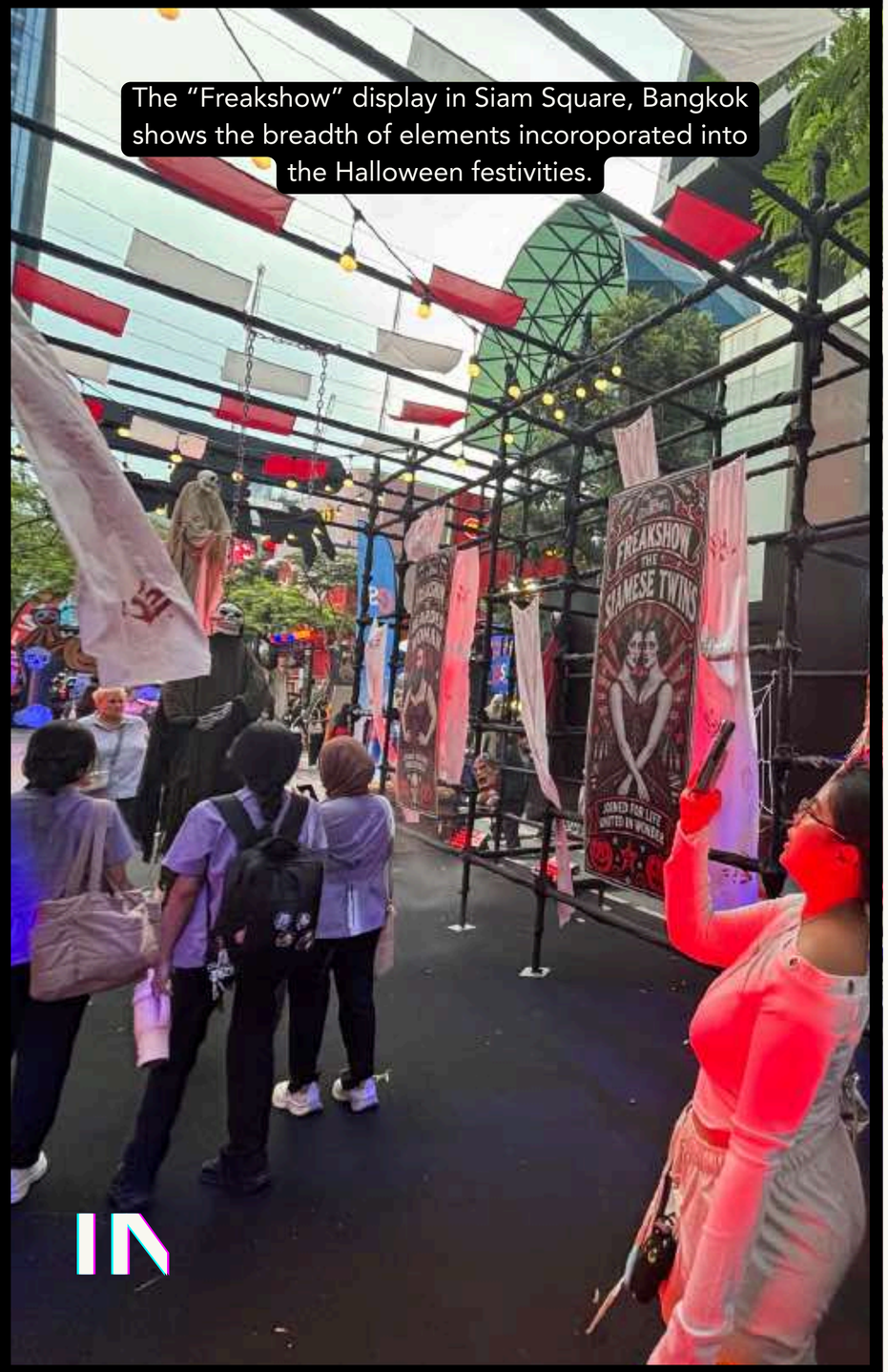



D'ARK
Vampire's Gaze
Halloween Special – Available This October Only


POINTS
BY SHERATON
← Bangkok
Beer
Garden


ISUZU





The “Freakshow” display in Siam Square, Bangkok shows the breadth of elements incoroporated into the Halloween festivities.

MAKE HALLOWEEN A NIGHT TO PLAN FOR

Build a sense of anticipation
Bangkok already has the pumpkins, costumes and shop displays. The opportunity is to give people something they’d choose to go out for. Start with the places already putting Halloween on and build around what they do well. A bar can give people a reason to dress up. A haunted attraction can put Thai ghost stories at the centre of the evening. A restaurant can make Halloween something customers can order.

Decide what people should recognise:
A few familiar cues can tell people straight away that it’s Halloween. Use them to point to something the brand actually offers. D’ARK’s Vampire’s Gaze did that with a coconut panna cotta dressed up as a Halloween special. A restaurant can take the same approach with one dish or drink people can only order that month. The theme gives customers something specific to look for when they arrive.

MAKE HALLOWEEN A NIGHT PEOPLE PLAN FOR

Give people a way to take part
A mall could give a haunted walk top billing and work with Thai horror creators to build it around stories local audiences may already know. Its restaurants could give people a reason to stay for dinner afterwards. A club could make face paint part of the invitation, with a few looks people can try before they go out. That plays into the way people already dress up and works in venues where masks have to come off at the door.

Check the assumptions that matter most
Find out whether Halloween changed what people chose to do. How many booked the haunted walk, ordered the special or came dressed up? Compare bookings or orders with a similar night at the same venue. Ask what made them pick that venue or that night. A busy bar tells you people went out. Finding out what tipped their choice helps you decide what to bring back, change or expand next October.



A free open-air pop concert with a loose Halloween theme brings a mass of onlookers, mixing locals and tourists.

BRING **HABIT NOW** A LIVE BRIEF, THE MARKET YOU'RE CONSIDERING AND THE BEHAVIOUR YOU'RE COUNTING ON.

CIVA HELPS YOU DECIDE WHAT TO KEEP, WHAT TO ADAPT AND WHAT TO CHECK LOCALLY BEFORE YOU SIGN IT OFF.

CONTACT MARC@THINKHABITNOW.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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