



# Samhain

Witch's New Year, Third Harvest, Spirit Night • Oct 31st

A time to remember those who have passed on, celebrate the end to Summer and prepare for the Winter months ahead. The earth and sun have fallen into slumber as the nights grow longer. Samhain is a magickal interval when the mundane laws of time and space are temporarily suspended, and the veil between worlds is thin and communication is easy between the two. It is a time to honor the Dark Mother and Dark Father, symbolized by the Crone and her aged Consort. Samhain is a night filled with magick and chaos.

**Traditions include:** leaving food offerings on altars and doorsteps for the wandering dead, leave a lit (or electronically lit) candle in a windowsill to guide the Spirits of Ancestors to the Summerland/Home, setting extra chairs out in the home/dinner table for unseen guests, burying apples along roadsides and paths for Spirits who have lost their way or have no descendants to provide for them, carving turnips or pumpkins to look like protective Spirits, bonfires

**Symbolism:** third harvest, the Mysteries, rebirth through death, gourds, apples, black cats, jack-o-lanterns, besoms, Spirit Night, astral realm, ancestors, thinning of the veil, divination, spiritual contact, ghosts/entities, bonfires/fire, old age, chaos

**Plants + Flowers:** mugwort, allspice, broomcorn, catnip, deadly nightshade, mandrake, oak leaves, sage, straw

**Foods:** turnips, apples, gourds, nuts, mulled wines, beef, pork, poultry, pomegranates, all grains, pumpkin pie, hazelnuts, cakes for the dead, corn, cranberry muffins + breads, ale, cider, herbal teas

**Incense:** heliotrope, mint, nutmeg, sage

**Crystals:** obsidian, labradorite, smokey quartz, amethyst, selenite, lapis lazuli, moonstone

**Colors:** orange, purple, black, deep sage green



# Yule

Winter Solstice • Dec 20-23

Yule sits opposite of Litha on the Wheel of the Year as the longest night of the calendar year. Starting the next morning at Sunrise, the days become longer. On this night our ancestors celebrated the rebirth of the Oak King and Sun King - the Giver of Life that warmed the frozen Earth.

**Traditions include:** decorating a yule tree, decorating the inside and outside of a home with holly and ivy to welcome Nature Sprites to join the celebration, toasts of spiced cider, children were escorted from house to house with gifts of clove spiked apples and oranges which were laid in baskets of evergreen boughs and wheat stalks dusted with flour, hanging of mistletoe, lighting of a Yule log with three candles nestled inside, burning of a Yule log all night long (gifted, not bought), caroling

**Symbolism:** rebirth of the sun, the longest night of the year, winter solstice, introspection, planning for the future, yule log, evergreen boughs or wreaths, holly, mistletoe hung in doorways, gold candles, baskets of clove studded with fruit, poinsettias, the Yule tree, rebirth, childhood, children

**Plants + Flowers:** bayberry, blessed thistle, evergreen, frankincense, holly, laurel, mistletoe, oak, pine, sage, yellow cedar

**Foods:** cookies and cakes, fruits, nuts, pork dishes, turkey, egg nogg, spiced cider, ginger tea, wassail, ale, apples, oranges

**Incense:** pine, cedar, bayberry, cinnamon

**Crystals:** ruby, bloodstone, garnet, emerald, diamond, clear quartz, azurite, snow quartz

**Colors:** green, red, white, purple, brown



# Imbolc

Oimelc, Candlemas, St. Brigid's Day • Feb 1-2

Imbolc celebrates the time of year when seeds are beginning to stir in anticipation for Spring (Imbolc means "in the belly of the Mother"). It is also the traditional lambing season of the old world, hence the name Oimelc "milk of ewes." Herd animals have either given birth to the first offspring of the year or their wombs are swollen and the milk of life is flowing into their teats and udders. It marks the center point of the dark half of the year (halfway point between Yule and Ostara). Imbolc is especially sacred to the Celtic Fire Goddess, Brigid, patron of smithcraft, healing, midwifery, and poetry. It is the festival of the Maiden, for from this day to March 21st it is her season to prepare for growth and renewal. The Maiden is honored as the Bride, on this Sabbat.

**Traditions include:** blessing seeds, consecration of agricultural tools, youth would make straw Brideo'gas (corn dollies) placed in baskets with white flower bedding and taken door to door where gifts were bestowed upon the image from each household, feasts, making of acorn wands for the Brideo'gas to hold, exchanging of Brideo'gas as a symbol of protection and prosperity in the coming year, hearth fires, placing a besom by the front door to symbolize sweeping out the old and welcoming the new, candles lit in each room of the house to honor the rebirth of the Sun, High Priestess wearing a crown of lights/candles to symbolize the return of the Goddess to her Maiden aspect

**Symbolism:** purity, growth, renewal, the reunion of the Goddess and the God, fertility, dispensing of the old and making way for the new, Brideo'gas, besoms, white flowers, candle wheels, Brigid's crosses, acorn wands, maidenhood

**Plants + Flowers:** angelica, basil, bay laurel, blackberry, coltsfoot, heather, iris, myrrh, tansy, violets, and all white or yellow flowers

**Foods:** any type of seeds, muffins, scones, breads, dairy products, peppers, onions, garlic, raisins, spiced wines and herbal teas

**Incense:** basil, bay, wisteria, cinnamon, violet, vanilla, myrrh

**Crystals:** amethyst, bloodstone, garnet, ruby, onyx, turquoise

**Colors:** white, red, pink



# Ostara

Spring/Vernal Equinox • March 20-23

The halfway point between Yule and Litha, where day and night are in equal balance as the Sun is making its grand return. Ostara is recognized as the first day of Spring. The cold winter is over and we look forward to longer, warmer days ahead. Our seeds and hopes from Imbolc are beginning to sprout and take effect. It is a time to honor the Goddess of Spring, Eostre, and her beloved Hare, and of course the Egg which is a symbol for nature's rebirth. It is also a time of celebrating the marriage between the Sun God and Maiden Goddess, and their conception. In nine months she will again become the Great Mother. It is a time of fertility, new growth, and newborn animals.

**Traditions include:** planting seeds/tending to plants, taking a long walk in nature with no intent other than reflecting on nature, spending time outside, coloring/dyeing eggs, giving baskets of candy and treats to loved ones, manifestation work

**Symbolism:** hare/rabbits, eggs, plants, flowers, young animals, young adults, maidenhood, Spring, hopes, dreams, seeds, Eostre, rebirth, renewal, conception, growth

**Foods:** leafy green vegetables, dairy foods, nuts, seeds, flower dishes, sprouts, egg dishes

**Plants + Flowers:** daffodil, woodruff, violet, olive, peony, iris, narcissus, and all spring flowers

**Incense:** jasmine, rose, strawberry, or any type of floral

**Crystals:** jasper, carnelian, tiger's eye, apatite, serpentine, angelite, peridot, orange calcite, amethyst

**Colors:** pastels, light green, blue, pink, purple



# Beltane

May Day, Spirit Night • May 1

Beltane marks the return of vitality, of passion. Ancient pagan traditions say that Beltane marks the emergence of the young God into manhood. Stirred by the energies at work in nature, he desires the Goddess. They fall in love, lie among the grasses and blossoms, and unite. The Goddess becomes pregnant of the God. To celebrate, a wedding feast for the God and Goddess must be prepared. Beltane incorporates traditions from the Gaelic Bealtaine, such as the bonfire, but it bears more relation to the Germanic May Day festival, both in its significance (focusing on fertility) and its rituals (such as May Pole dancing). Some traditions celebrate this holiday on May 1st while others begin their celebration the eve before on April 30th. Beltane has long been celebrated with feasts and rituals. The name means fire of Bel; Belinos being one name for the Sun God, whose coronation feast we now celebrate. As summer begins, weather becomes warmer, and the plant world blossoms and an exuberant mood prevails. In old Celtic traditions it was a time of unabashed sexuality and promiscuity, where marriages of a year and a day could be undertaken but it is rarely observed in that manner in modern times. In the old Celtic times, young people would spend the entire night in the woods "A-Maying," and then dance around the phallic maypole the next morning. Older married couples were allowed to remove their wedding rings (and the restrictions they imply) for this one night. May morning is a magickal time for wild water (dew, flowing streams, and springs) which is collected and used to bathe in for beauty, or to drink for health.

**Traditions include:** rising at the first light of dawn to go outdoors and gather flowers and branches to decorate your home, braid flowers into your hair or make flower crowns, decorate your body, bonfires, maypole dancing, bathing in fresh water or herbs, outdoor picnics, grand feasts, gardening, early morning walks, making/planting of wish boxes, stay out all night long

**Symbolism:** bonfires, maypoles, sexuality, fertility, flowers, phalluses, water, unity, handfasting/marriages, young adulthood, blossoming, fire, spirit night, may day, desire, beauty, good health/luck, light, passion, vitality

**Foods:** breads, grains, oats, cakes, cookies, honey, dairy, fruits

**Plants + Flowers:** blessed thistle, daffodil, dogwood, coriander, dragon's blood, fern, fireweed, flaxseed, hawthorn, marjoram, rue, snapdragon, mushroom, almond, meadowsweet, rose, woodruff, tansy, elder leaves

**Incense:** rose, gardenia, jasmine, ylang ylang, peach, musk, vanilla

**Crystals:** malachite, garnet, rose quartz, emerald, beryl, tourmaline

**Colors:** red, orange, yellow, gold



# Litha

Summer Solstice, Mid-Summer • June 20-22

Litha sits opposite of Yule on the Wheel of the Year as the longest day of the calendar year. Light and life are abundant. At mid-summer, the Sun God has reached the moment of his greatest strength. Seated on his greenwood throne, he is also Lord of the Forests, and his face is seen in countless ancient architecture peering from foliate masks. The Goddess is very pregnant and coming into her Mother aspect. From this point forward, each day becomes shorter and shorter until we reach Yule. We celebrate the beauty of life at its fullest point and the blossomed world around us. Gardens are abuzz with fae, insects and life.

**Traditions include:** reaffirming vows to the Lord and Lady, dedicating self to old traditions, wearing and making flower crowns, spending time outside or in bodies of water, gardening/foraging, hiking/walking, camping, realigning with nature, grounding, sun bathing

**Symbolism:** Sun, plants and greenery, honey, bees, flower crowns, forests and meadows, foliate masks, adulthood, abundance, prosperity, light, oak trees, bonfires, pregnancy, motherhood

**Foods:** garden fresh fruits and vegetables, honey

**Plants + Flowers:** mugwort, vervain, chamomile, rose, honeysuckle, lily, oak, lavender, ivy, yarrow, fern, elder, wild thyme, daisy, carnation

**Incense:** lemon, wisteria, rose, myrrh, pine

**Crystals:** sunstone, ruby, citrine, tiger's eye, carnelian, garnet

**Colors:** light green, blue, yellow, gold, purple, pink, red, orange



# Lammas

Lughnasadh, First Harvest • July 31-Aug 1

A time to celebrate the first harvest of the year, and recognize that the hot summer days will soon come to an end. The plants of spring wither and drop seeds to ensure future crops. Grains are ready to be harvested and the fruits are ripe for picking. We give thanks for the food on our tables. As we transition closer to Autumn the Celtic Sun God enters his old age, but is not yet dead. The God symbolically loses some of his strength as the Sun rises farther in the south each day and the nights grow longer.

Lughnasadh means the funeral games of Lugh, the Sun God. However, the funeral is not his own but the funeral games he hosts in honor of his foster-mother Tailte. For that reason, the traditional Tailtean craft fairs and Tailtean marriages (which last for a year and a day) are also celebrated at this time.

**Traditions include:** celebrating the end of Summer, making of corn dollies, Tailtean craft fairs, feasts with family or coven members, saving and planting seeds from the fruits consumed during the feast/ritual, walk through fields and orchards, spend time along springs/creeks/rivers/ponds/lakes, reflect on the bounty and love of the Lord and Lady, baking loaves of bread, honoring ancestors for their hard work, give thanks for blessings and abundances

**Symbolism:** harvest(s), fall, Lugh, food, corn dollies, giving thanks, seeds, abundance, motherhood, parenthood, sunflowers

**Food:** grains, breads, berries, apples, fruits and vegetables harvested

**Plants + Flowers:** sunflowers, all grains, grapes, heather, blackberries, sloe, crab apples, pears

**Incense:** aloe, sandalwood, rose

**Crystals:** carnelian, tiger's eye, citrine, aventurine, black obsidian, quartz, agate

**Colors:** green, gold, beige, brown, tan, yellow, orange



# Mabon

Fall/Autumn Equinox, Second Harvest • Sept 21-23

The Autumn equinox is the halfway point between Litha and Yule, dividing day and night equally. Mabon is recognized as the first day of Fall. It is a time to pay our respects to the impending dark. We give thanks to the waning sunlight, as we store our harvest of this year's crops. The Druids call this celebration Mea'n Fo'mhair, and honor the Green Man, the God of the Forest, by offering libations to trees. Wiccans celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone, and her consort the God as he prepares for death and re-birth. At this festival, it is appropriate to wear all of your finery, dine, and celebrate in a lavish setting. It is the drawing to and of family as we prepare for the winding down of the year at Samhain. It is a time to finish old business as we ready for a period of rest, relaxation, and reflection.

Mabon is considered a time of the Mysteries. It is a time to honor aging Deities and the Spirit World. Considered a time of balance, it is when we stop and relax and enjoy the fruits of our personal harvests, whether they be from toiling in our gardens, working at our jobs, raising our families, or just coping with the hustle-bustle of everyday life.

**Traditions include:** offering ciders/wines/herbs/fertilizer to the trees, giving thanks for crops, lavish feasts and gatherings, finishing business, prioritizing rest/relaxation/reflection, journaling, grounding, making wine, gathering dried herbs/plants/seeds, walks in the woods, adorning burial sites with leaves/acorns/pine cones to honor those who've passed on, giving thanks

**Symbolism:** harvest(s), fall, giving thanks, equality and balance, the Mysteries, darkness, old age, death and rebirth, reflection, family, thanks, wine, gourds, acorns, grains, corn, apples, pomegranates, seeds, horns

**Food:** breads, nuts, apples, pomegranates, potatoes, carrots, onions, and other harvest vegetables

**Plants + Flowers:** acorn, benzoin, ferns, grains, sage, honeysuckle, marigold, milkweed, myrrh, rose, passionflower, Solomon's seal, tobacco, thistle, and vegetables

**Incense:** autumn blend-benzoin, myrrh, sage

**Crystals:** sapphire, lapis lazuli, yellow agates

**Colors:** red, orange, maroon, brown, gold