

Celebrating the Seasons¹

Lore and Rituals

by Selena Fox

Excerpts from a work in progress by Selena Fox

The Solstices, Equinoxes, and mid-points between, also known as the Cross Quarters, have been celebrated by a variety of Nature peoples around the world and across the ages. Today, Wiccans and other Pagans often blend together ancient as well as contemporary approaches to celebrating these seasonal festivals.

For each of these holidays, I get a brief overview and share some associated customs. I have had direct experience with all of these. The Sabbat cycle I describe here reflects the climate zone in the Northern hemisphere where I live as well as my own multi-cultural, spiritual approach with a Wiccan emphasis. Feel free to adapt these customs to reflect your own environment and spiritual path.

Wheel of the Year: Circle of Sun and Seasons by Selena Fox

Study Group Guide for Pagan Paths Workshop

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Samhain

Also called: Halloween, All Hallows Eve, All Saints & All Souls, Day of the Dead

dates: October 31, early November

colors: black, orange, indigo

tools: votive candles, magic mirror, cauldron, pumpkins, divination tools

energy: death & transformation; Wiccan new year

goddesses: Crone, Hecate

gods: Horned Hunter, Cernunnos, Anubis

rituals: honoring ancestors, releasing old, foreseeing future, understanding death and rebirth

customs: jack o'lanterns, spirit plate, ancestor altar, divination, costumes

Winter Solstice

Also called: Yule, Jul, Saturnalia, Christmas, solar/secular New Year

dates: around December 21 colors: red, green, white

tools: mistletoe, evergreen wreath, lights, gifts, holly, Yule log, Yule tree

energy: regeneration & renewal

goddesses: Great Mother, Isis, Mary, Tonazin, Lucina, Bona Dea

gods: Sun Child, Horus, Jesus, Mithras, Santa/Odin, Saturn, Holly King

rituals: personal renewal, world peace, honoring family & friends

customs: wreaths, lights, gift-giving, singing, feasting, resolutions

Candlemas

Also called: Imbolc, Oimeic, Brigid's Day; merged with Lupercalia/Valentines Day

dates: February 2, early February

colors: white, red

tools: candles, seeds, Brigid wheel, milk

energy: conception, initiation, inspiration

goddesses: Brigid, Maiden

gods: Groundhog, other creatures emerging from hibernation; young Sun

rituals: creative inspiration, purification, initiation, candle work, house & temple blessings

customs: lighting candles, seeking omens of Spring, cleaning house, welcoming Brigid

Spring Equinox

Also called: Ostara, St. Patrick's Day, Easter

dates: around March 21

colors: green, yellow

tools: eggs, basket, green clothes

energy: birthing, sprouting, greening

goddesses: Ostara, Kore, Maiden

gods: Hare, Green Man

rituals: breakthrough, new growth, new projects, seed blessings

customs: wearing green, egg games, new clothes, egg baskets

Beltane

Also called: May Eve, May Day, Walspurgis Night

dates: April 30, early May

colors: rainbow spectrum, blue, green, pastels, all colors

tools: Maypole & ribbons, flower crowns, fires, bowers, fields

¹ C:\My Documents\SCHOOLofLocalChurch\Lessons\33PaganHolidays\Articles\HolidaysList1.doc

energy: youthful play, exuberance, sensuality, pleasure
goddesses: May Queen, Flora
gods: May King, Jack in the Green
rituals: love, romance, fertility, crop blessings, creativity endeavors
customs: dancing Maypole, jumping fire, mating, flower baskets

Summer Solstice

Also called: Midsummer, Litha, St. John's Day
dates: around June 21
colors: yellow, gold, rainbow colors
tools: bonfires, Sun wheel, Earth circles of stone energy: partnership
goddesses: Mother Earth, Mother Nature
gods: Father Sun/Sky, Oak King
rituals: community, career, relationships, Nature Spirit communion, planetary wellness
customs: bonfires, processions, all night vigil, singing, feasting, celebrating with others

Lammas

Also called: Lughnassad
dates: August 2, early August
colors: orange, yellow, brown, green
tools: sacred loaf of bread, harvested herbs, bonfires
energy: fruitfulness, reaping prosperity
goddesses: Demeter, Ceres, Corn Mother
gods: Grain God, Lugh, John Barleycorn
rituals: prosperity, generosity, continued success
customs: offering of first fruits/grains, games, country fairs

Fall Equinox

Also called: Mabon, Michaelmas
dates: around September 21
colors: orange, red, brown, purple, blue
tools: cornucopia, corn, harvested crops
energy: appreciation & harvest
goddesses: Bona Dea, Land Mother
gods: Mabon, Sky Father
rituals: thanksgiving, harvest, introspection
customs: offerings to land, preparing for cold weather, bringing in harvest