

Thank you for your interest in my book!

The celebration of Yule, the ancient Pagan festival that became the Christian holiday Christmas, was traditionally a 12 day celebration. I am deeply drawn to the lore of European history and mythology and so I spent the last several years finding ways to celebrate the full 12 days with my family. This is the result. I hope this little guide helps you and yours enjoy this time of year (what I like to call “The Holly-Daze”) a little more.

Many modern people, including Pagans, celebrate the Winter Solstice, as the turning point where the daylight hours begin to get a little longer. If you already celebrate the Winter Solstice, but don't yet celebrate the full 12 day festival, this guide will help you to do that. If you already celebrate for 12 days, this book will give you some extra ideas and inspiration.

Even if this is your first time celebrating the Winter Solstice, don't be daunted. Somewhere down the line your ancestors celebrated this festival of light, and so it is already written in your DNA. You will also already be familiar with many of the traditions, since most Christmas traditions are based on this older, more ancient festival.

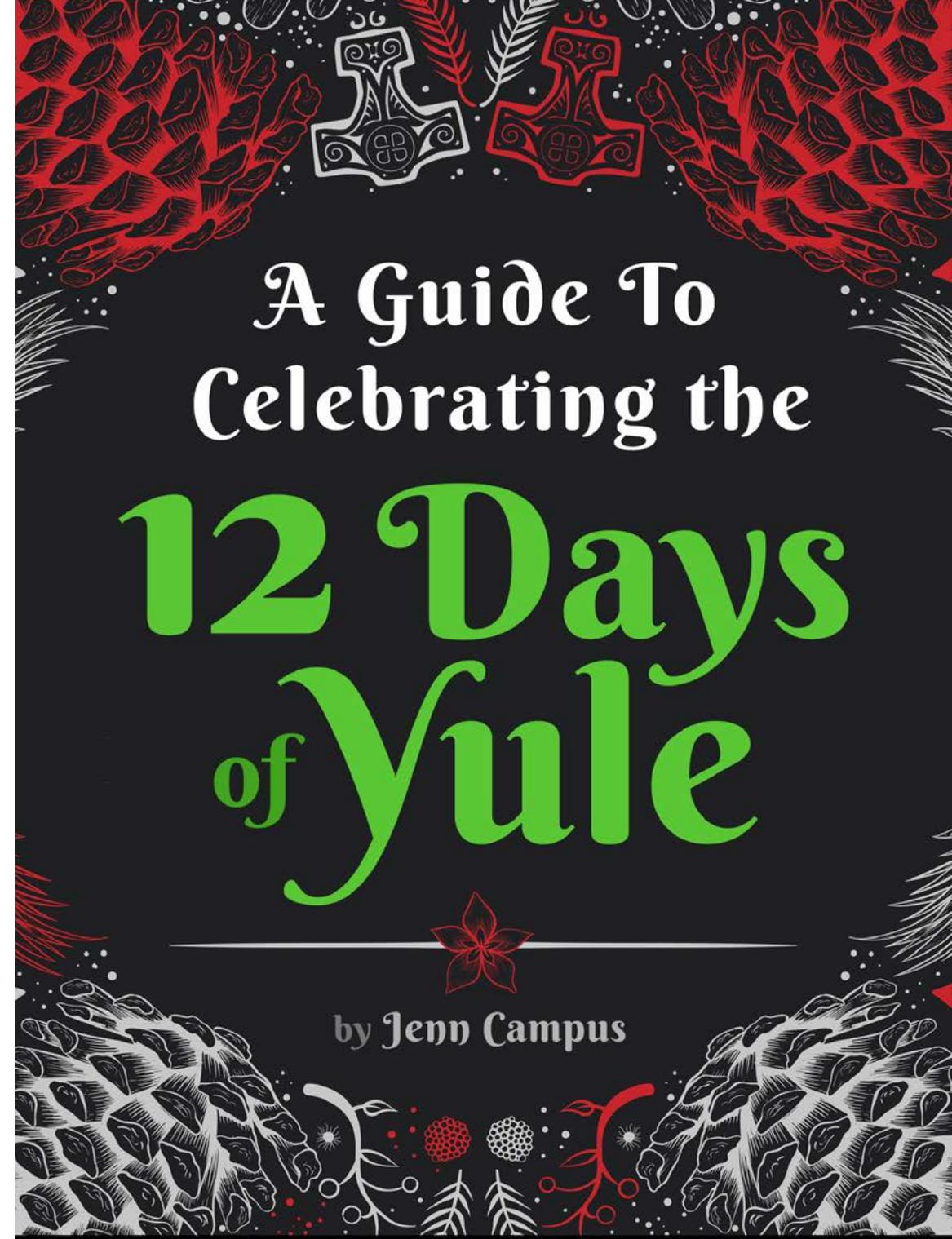
I hope you enjoy the first chapter, and if you do, you can [learn more](#) about the full book and where to buy it.

If you know someone else who might enjoy this type of guide, please tell them about my website and invite them to sign up for the newsletter so they can receive their own copy.

Thanks,

Jenn

jenncampusauthor.com



Heathen-style: Folklore, Activities and Recipes
For The Whole Family to Enjoy For 12 Days

Second Edition



Note from the Author:

All my publications are part and parcel of my life's mission to help bring people back to the Old Ways with simple yet impactful tools and frameworks that fit into our Modern Days. These include daily rituals, seasonal celebrations, Ancestral and traditional foods, traditional skills, folk, and fairy tales, and ways to create relationships with the lands we inhabit and those our people came from.

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Dedication:

To the Gnomes of Yule



A Guide to Celebrating the 12 Days of Yule

*(Heathen-style!) Folklore, Activities, Rituals, and
Recipes For The Whole Family to Enjoy For 12 Days!*

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Introduction

For most Pagans of any denomination, Yule is a high holy season. In modern times, it's widely recognized as a 12-day celebration starting on the eve of the Winter Solstice and culminating in the New Year.

Yule was not historically celebrated this way. Yet, by their very definition, traditions are ever-evolving. Sometimes, to keep them alive requires us to look at an incomplete picture, focusing on what components have held on through the centuries. Then, we can diligently work our way backward, unraveling some of the roots to their origin. If direct tracing isn't feasible, our aim becomes honoring the spirit of these traditions as authentically as possible.

A blend of respect for tradition and modern-day accessibility is the spirit with which this guide is written. My hope is that readers will find both inspiration and confidence to honor this sacred season in ways that resonate deeply with their ancient hearts.

From historical records, we understand that Yule was celebrated over several weeks, sometimes even spanning months, contingent upon the region. In certain contexts, the festivities might have started around mid-November, with St. Martin's Day, and extended until February 2. Generally speaking, the timeframe for Yule celebrations can vary within these parameters.

We also know this wintertime celebration was so important to people in ancient and historical times because the name survived well beyond conversion to Christianity. In Medieval Europe, the feast was still referred to as 'Yule,' although it had adopted Christian overtones by that time. Today, many Nordic countries continue to use variations of the name: Jul in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; Jól in Icelandic and Faroese, and Joulu in Finnish.

As time progressed, Christians adapted the Yuletide season into the now-famous 12 Days of Christmas. Despite the historical emphasis on Yule as a season, many contemporary Pagans recognize "Yule" as a singular day, marking only the Winter Solstice. If you're yearning to embrace a deeper, more symbolic winter season beyond the scope of modern commercialism, then this guide is crafted with you in mind.

THE HISTORIC YULE

Even the etymology of the word Yule¹ is shrouded in mystery.

While the term's usage during Christian celebrations of the Medieval period is documented, its deeper roots are more elusive. For instance, Yule doubles as the name for January in Common Germanic, a linguistic trait mirrored across various Scandinavian languages and Faroese. Yet, attempts by linguists to locate Indo-European cognates outside the Germanic cluster remain ongoing.

It's likely that Norse culture also celebrated Yule over a period beginning near or around the Winter Solstice. Despite a wealth of scholarly articles, precisely pinpointing the Norse Yule dates and correlating them with our current calendar remains a complex endeavor.

That's because our Ancestors didn't use the same calendars or models of telling time as we do in modern times. Most ancient celebrations and feast days were marked by the moon. Months were determined by lunar phases instead of dates on a calendar. That makes sense, but what it means in terms of determining feast dates complicates our attempts to juxtapose ancient practices onto contemporary calendars.

For the Old Norse, Yule wasn't just a day but spanned two distinct months. The Winter Solstice marked the conclusion of the first Yule month, with the subsequent Yule month commencing with the next new moon. Significantly, the jól blót, or the Jul feast, was celebrated during the full moon of this second Yule month—essentially, the first full moon after the Winter Solstice's new moon. By our current Gregorian calendar's standards, this would place the celebration between January 5th and February 2nd.

I want to explain this from the start because it is an essential key to understanding the mindset of our Ancestors that informed the way they lived. Even something as simple as telling time and dates on a calendar is tied to a particular worldview. It just goes to show how different our modern systems are designed. We've gone from finding our way with the moon in the night sky to a standard homogenized number on a calendar to mark the forward movement of time. Just this tells us how our cultural mindset has shifted over the millennia.

¹ Wikipedia: Yule

Although I respect the ways in which our Ancestors celebrated Yule, our culture is no longer designed that way. The reality is that most of us reading this guide work within the framework of the Gregorian calendar. Many of us work 9-5, Monday through Friday.

Some of us might not even get holiday time off from work. Even if these examples don't specifically apply to you as an individual, you understand where I am going with this. It's OK if we celebrate Yule according to the Gregorian calendar. Doing this allows the celebrations to be more accessible for most of us. However, if you're drawn to explore Yule dates rooted in ancient practices, I wholeheartedly encourage that pursuit.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

This guide is crafted for all who wish to immerse themselves in the 12 Days of Yule, whether you're an individual, a couple, or a family with or without children spanning all age groups. My husband and I have celebrated the 12 Days of Yule long before the birth of our daughter in 2013. As this second edition is released, our daughter has reached ten years, and our son is seven.

Throughout this guide, a foundational belief of mine becomes evident: what we nurture endures. The onus rests on us, the modern Pagans and Heathens, to breathe life into our age-old traditions.

If not us, then who will champion their continuity?

It's imperative to understand that nothing, even in the days of our forebearers, remains static. The ever-present rhythm of life is change.

Cultural traditions aren't bound by rigid lines of purity. They pulsate with life, and as they thrive, they evolve. This fluidity and ability to adapt and grow render living traditions inherently beautiful. If we want to keep our practices alive, accessible, and relatable to people living in modern times and those to come, there are places where they will have to adapt to the times that we live in.

Although I am an anthropologist, I am not writing this guidebook as a scholarly piece. Instead, it's a heartfelt beacon for those leading bustling contemporary lives yet yearning for the embrace of the Old Ways, aspiring to infuse age-old traditions' spirit into today's practices.



Moreover, this guide is a manifestation of my journey as a mother eager to bequeath familial and cultural traditions to my children. My hope is for them to unearth joy and magic in our shared festive rituals. If their childhood is painted with the warm hues of cherished memories, they'll likely be inspired to pass these traditions forward, enriching the tapestry of the future.

HOW WE CELEBRATE YULE

While the specifics of the historic Yule remain a tapestry of complexities, many modern Pagans, especially those aligned with the Norse, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon paths, earnestly seek ways to honor the 12 Days of Yule.

However, a conundrum often arises on how best to infuse each of these twelve days with elements from the Old Ways. Just as we can't know the exact dates our Ancestors celebrated Yule, we can't know exactly how they celebrated either.

Most of the old traditions were passed down through the generations orally and lost over time as people embraced newer faiths. Christian monks and historians created the only written documentation during or after the conversion of our Ancestors.

But even if we knew exactly how our Ancestors celebrated, it would be unlikely we could follow the rituals and traditions exactly living in our modern world. How many people in our modern world would find it practical, or even desirable, to sacrifice a wild boar, using its blood to bless the participants?

This guide attempts to bridge the gap between the ancient and the contemporary, resonating with today's celebrants.

In that light, I have been asked repeatedly for over a decade now - How do you celebrate Yule? What do you do exactly? Which activities, rituals, prayers, and celebrations do you participate in?

My answer? As devotees to this path and our Gods, it is up to us to create traditions based on what we know about this season combined with inspiration from how our ancestors might have celebrated. We can then use these traditions to celebrate with our loved ones, who can pass the traditions on to the next generations.

I began sharing our daily activities during the Yule season on my Facebook page in 2012. Each year, as Yuletide approaches, queries and requests pour in, with many seeking a structured guide replete with ideas and insights.

In the few weeks leading up to Yule, people want to be prepared and have things planned out with all the materials they might need. I'm the same way, so I was inspired to create an easy-to-follow guide with many ideas suitable to a wide variety of people.

This guide, celebrating the 12 Days of Yule, crystallizes years of personal evolution and my journey in crafting traditions rooted in the beliefs and spirit of our Ancestors for my own family based on what I know about the worldview and spirituality of our Ancestors.

Structured by day, each segment of this book revolves around a specific symbol or theme, weaving folklore, principles, or concepts into the tapestry. These themes then unfurl into activities, rituals, crafts, and recipes, allowing a deeper dive into each day's essence.

This handy and easy-to-follow guide is meant to be a source of inspiration from my family to yours so that your family can celebrate the 12 Days of Yule together and create your own traditions and rituals.

HOLLY DAZE

I affectionately dub this season as "The Holly-daze." Although we choose to make it a sacred time set aside to count our blessings, celebrate life, and appreciate each other, it can be stressful. Many people feel they need to do too much, buy too much, and see everyone in the world that matters to them. This mindset can put even the best-intentioned of us into a daze.

Rather than meandering in a mindless frenzy, our genuine aspiration is to delve deep into the magic and mystery of the season, forging meaningful connections with the world, our inner selves, and our loved ones. It's about cherishing moments and sensing the profound power of the Old Gods and the Ancient Ways coursing through us.

It's all too easy to fall into the consumer-driven trap set for us by large retailers. Or the unrealistic expectations from family and friends, and often ourselves through the conditioning of societal norms that inform how we see the world and our place within it, especially during the holidays.

Don't get me wrong; our Ancestors often enjoyed displaying their wealth and material goods. However, those possessions were hard won, sometimes literally, and not procured through credit.

The treasures they were so proud of came straight from the Earth, like a beautiful and productive flock of sheep or a good harvest. Others were made by skilled artisans and craftsmen who used their artistry to turn raw materials into forms of beauty, whether jewels or the alchemy of fiber turned into exquisitely tailored clothes.

Our Ancestor's prized possessions were passed down through the generations for as long as a family could hold on to them, carrying stories and sentiments.

How many of the items that we buy during the holidays can be categorized as such in our modern times? How much will just end up in a landfill by the next Yule?

This isn't about casting stones or judgments. If you've embarked on this reading journey, it's a testament to your quest for something beyond the mundane, beyond the scripted norms of society. Evolution is constant, and as we navigate this path, it's essential to approach it with self-compassion and grace.

My intention with this guide is to start changing how we do things in a lighthearted manner. To open our minds to the infinite possibilities and ways of connecting with what matters to us as individuals.

From personal experience, I've learned that small, deliberate steps often lead to the most significant transformations, especially when undertaken with joy. Engage with activities that make you feel harmonious and sidestep those that feel discordant. Don't participate in anything that doesn't make you feel at home with yourself.

I do hope you find this guide helpful and fun. Remember, these are only suggestions and a little inspiration, not a to-do list. All families are different and like to focus on their own specific likes during the season. So, use what is valuable and enjoyable, and leave the rest.

Blessed Yule, and Merry Winter Solstice to you and yours!

IN PREPARATION

In preparation for the 12-day celebration, I like to gather everything we need to have on hand. This way, we can truly settle into the holiday without running out to get a lot of last-minute things. A bit of organization beforehand makes everything more relaxing and enjoyable.

I recommend reading or at least skimming this guide as part of your preparation so you can develop a general plan for how your family would like to celebrate. Again, this is only a loose plan.

Here's how I usually prepare:

1 - Craft a Daily Yule Calendar

This guide offers an array of ideas, but don't feel pressured to embrace them all each year. Incorporate your family's cherished traditions or introduce new ones.

You can make your calendar in your own style. You could use a traditional paper calendar or a digital one and add the daily schedule there. It can be a utilitarian notebook like mine usually is. I typically need more space than a physical calendar can provide. I write the dates for the 12 days in a notebook and then write all the activities and recipes I want to use for each day.

If you want to be craftier, you could also decorate small bags for each day and write on separate pieces of paper what you want to do and place them in the bag. Then, you could add the altar items for each day in the corresponding bags and have the kids open the corresponding bag each morning.

2 - Procure Ingredients

Shop for all necessary foodstuffs required for the main festive meals, baked goods, and gatherings with loved ones.

3 - Clean the House

Make sure things are tidy and the energy flow is good in the home.

4 - Create a Yule Altar

We will do this together, but the first step is simply setting the stage. To begin, you might place items on it that symbolize this season for you and your family. It can be nature-inspired with snowflakes, evergreens, the sun, and stars. Or you might choose to incorporate well-known figures, like Father Winter, reindeer, tomten, or snowmen. It's entirely up to you. You will use your altar to place daily offerings over the 12 Days of Yule.

5 - Decorate the House

I tend to see the home as an extension of my Altar, filling it up with seasonal sacred items from my childhood, procured on memorable trips, or for various other reasons. We normally deck the halls during the second week of December. My birthday is the second week of the month, and these days, I enjoy holiday decorating for my birthday, but that's just my personal preference. You can do it whenever it's right for you.

6 - Designate a Yule Log

If you have a fireplace or woodstove somewhere to have a fire safely, it is a good idea to pick out your Yule Log ahead of time so you know where it is when it is time for that ritual. If you don't have a way to burn things, you can use your yule log to place candles on or nearby. You can get some electric candles if you have small children or pets or worry about fires.

7 - Put Up and Decorate Your Yule Tree

Some years, we do this on the eve of the Solstice, but I find that day is super heavy with other activities. Some years, it feels rushed if we wait that long to do it. Recently, we've started putting the tree up when we decorate the rest of the house and save putting the star on top for the Solstice. Again, it's a personal preference.

Be prepared to place a small item on your altar every day to symbolize that day's theme. Each day, I specify a symbol and suggest you add something to your altar representing that. Sometimes, we might create the symbol together, or you might add something of your own choosing.

You might also like to leave a small offering of food and drink each night to the Gods, Goddesses, Ancestors, or other spirits you have a relationship with or want to honor this time of year.

I think of these entities in my life as family or very good friends, and I want to engage them in our celebrations by giving them the best of what the season has to offer. Therefore, our family provides food and drink each night of the 12 days. We usually burn the offerings in our woodstove or fireplace, but you can also bury them outside, place them in a tree, or even compost them.

Let's get started.

FIRST DAY - DECEMBER 20

MOTHER'S NIGHT

Symbol	<i>Mother</i>
Folklore	<i>Female Ancestor Spirits</i>
Activities & Crafts	<i>Maternal Memory Jar</i> <i>Bake Cookies</i> <i>Color a picture of your favorite Goddess</i>
Rituals & Offerings	<i>Create a Disir/ Yule Altar</i> <i>Braiding Ritual</i> <i>Mother's Night Prayer</i> <i>Cookies & Goddess Pictures</i>
Recipes	<i>Scottish Shortbread</i>

THE DEEP ROOTS OF MOTHER'S NIGHT

The celebration of Mother's Night taps into the deep-rooted acknowledgment of the power of our maternal lineages. Across various cultures, the matriarchal line holds a reservoir of wisdom, strength, and resilience. The ancient Germanic and Norse societies believed this strength didn't dissipate after death; it continued to nurture and guide the living. This reverence for maternal spirits links back to the concept of hearth and home as sacred spaces, protected and blessed by these ancestors.

MOTHER'S NIGHT HISTORY

Mōdraniht is old English for "Mother's Night," an ancient festival attested to by the Venerable Bede, an English monk writing in the early 8th century CE. In his work *De temporum ratione* ("The Reckoning of Time"), Bede briefly mentions that the Anglo-Saxon pagans dedicated the eve of the Winter Solstice to the celebration of Mōdraniht, or Night of the Mothers.

Mōdraniht marked the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon Yule festivities. Yule itself was a significant time of year, filled with feasting and merriment. This period was seen as a liminal time when the veil between the living and the spiritual realms was thin.



However, specifics about how the Anglo-Saxons celebrated Mōdraniht are scarce and based chiefly on conjecture due to the limited primary sources from that era. So, in the spirit with which this book was written, to breathe new life into the Old Ways, we will find ways to make this ancient celebration relevant to our modern days.

FEMALE ANCESTOR SPIRITS

The Mothers we are talking about when we speak of Mother's Night are our healthy and vibrant female ancestors who have transitioned into the halls of their mothers before them and, therefore, speak and act with the authority of the lineage as a whole.

These Mothers have since healed from the impacts of profound negativity they experienced during their human life. These events could be personal to them, like the experience of trauma, or they could be a cultural or societal wound that greatly affected them while they were alive, like displacement, racism, war, or poverty.

To put it simply, not all Ancestors are wise and kind, and just as there are sketchy people in life, there are sketchy people on the other side, and it is best to begin ancestral engagement with the ones who are well in spirit.

On this night, we especially honor the mothers and grandmothers of the maternal line that some Pagans, especially Heathens, believe watch over a family or clan indefinitely once they pass on. These could be ancient Ancestors from millennia past or other more recent ones who have taken on that duty since they have crossed over. Many times, these elevated Ancestors are referred to as Disir or Idisi.

The Disir hold a powerful place in ancient Germanic folklore. These female spirits are connected to fate, much like the Norns. In some Skaldic poetry, sagas, and Eddas, Valkyries and the Disir are closely intertwined. Valkyries, those who choose the slain warriors to come to Valhalla, can be seen as a subset of the Disir, though their roles are more specialized. Yet both share a protective and guiding nature to the humans they favor.

Norns in Norse mythology bear a striking resemblance to the Fates in Greek and Roman mythologies. They are both groups of female entities responsible for determining the destinies of gods and mortals alike. The Norns are usually described as a trio of goddesses who reside by the World Tree, Yggdrasil, at the well Urd. They shape destiny by weaving the web of fate.



There are three main Norns: Urd (What Once Was), Verdandi (What is Coming into Being), and Skuld (What Shall Be). The Norse view of fate is that it is directly tied to ancestral debt and can be changed based on our current actions.

However, there are other Norns that have more interaction with humans and sometimes work together to change events. Some believe that each ancestral lineage has its own Norn attached to it. We can see this belief illustrated in the role of the Fairy Godmother in many fairy tales.

The Matronae, or the “Mothers,” have been found depicted on stone altars and reliefs across the Roman Empire, particularly in regions that align with present-day Germany and France. They were often described in threes and are believed to have been worshipped as deities of fertility, fate, and abundance. The connection between the Matronae and the Disir is in their shared role as protective and guiding spirits, especially in the context of family and clan.

Ancestors or the Beloved Dead are potent allies since they were all human once or lived their lives on this earthly plane. Therefore, they understand more than the Gods and other spirits what it is like to be human: our struggles, triumphs, the little hurts, and frustrations. Ancestors can be some of our greatest helpers when the help we seek is more mundane in nature or has to do with our own families, especially. That is why this night is set aside for them and kicks off the 12-day celebration.



HOW TO CELEBRATE MOTHER'S NIGHT

In these modern times, Mother's Night is sometimes celebrated on the eve of the Winter Solstice, and I've also seen some who celebrate on December 24. Again, this is because the various ways of telling time have changed through the millennia.

There is no right or wrong answer here.

We always celebrate Mother's Night on the 20th. This is one of my favorites of the 12 Days because it begins with our origins. We all come from a mother, so it seems fitting to start the festivities here. If you are celebrating the full 12 days, the traditional end is New Year's Eve or December 31, no matter where the actual Solstice falls.

Maternal Memory Jar

Creating a Maternal Memory Jar is a poignant and straightforward way to honor our mothers and maternal ancestors.

Materials: A clear jar, small pieces of paper or parchment, a pen, and any decorative items (ribbons, stickers, etc.).

Process:

1. On each piece of paper, write down a memory, lesson, or piece of wisdom you associate with your mother, grandmother, or any maternal figure in your life. This could be something as simple as a recipe, a saying, a song, or a detailed memory.
2. As you write, please take a moment to reflect on the memory, feelings, and emotions associated with it, then fold the paper and place it in the jar.
3. Decorate the jar as you see fit, perhaps tying it with a ribbon or placing a sticker that reminds you of your maternal lineage.
4. Whenever you need guidance or want to feel close to your wise grandmothers, pull out a memory and reflect on it.

BAKING COOKIES

Mother's Night is a sweet celebration for my family, honoring all the women who have gone before us and celebrating their lives as they live on in us. So naturally, our celebration involves the baking of sweet things.

Baking cookies was always a big event at this time of year when I was growing up. I come from a large Italian family on my mom's side, and my maternal grandmother spent many weeks before the winter holidays baking cookies in preparation. Some were for our family celebrations; others were to give away to extended family and friends. But mostly, I think she just loved doing it. She had a deft and precise hand, and her cookies always looked professionally made.

They were also delicious.

Many of us relate to stories of grandmothers, mothers, or other female relatives baking cookies at this time of year. It seems to be a common theme. Even before our recent Ancestors and the popularity (and ingredients) for cookies, special treats were always a part of these celebrations at this time of year. On this day, we can honor our female Ancestors by baking cookies (something that strikes us as very maternal) and leaving cookies as offerings to them.

We can use this night to remember and celebrate all our female Ancestors.

Yet, we tend to focus our celebrations on those from our matrilineal lines - so my mother and my birth mother and my husband's mother and their mothers and their mother before and so on.

You can take it a step further and think of traditional cookies from the places your maternal ancestors hail from originally (or more modernly) and make those. For example, in my case, my maternal line is primarily Scottish, so I often make shortbread. I am also adopted and grew up in an Italian-American household, so I also make Cuccidati, or Sicilian fig cookies, because my grandmother always made those.

These are activities that all the members of the household can join in on. Ask everyone in the family what cookies they remember from childhood or which female Ancestors they wish to honor.

The more cookies, the merrier, right?

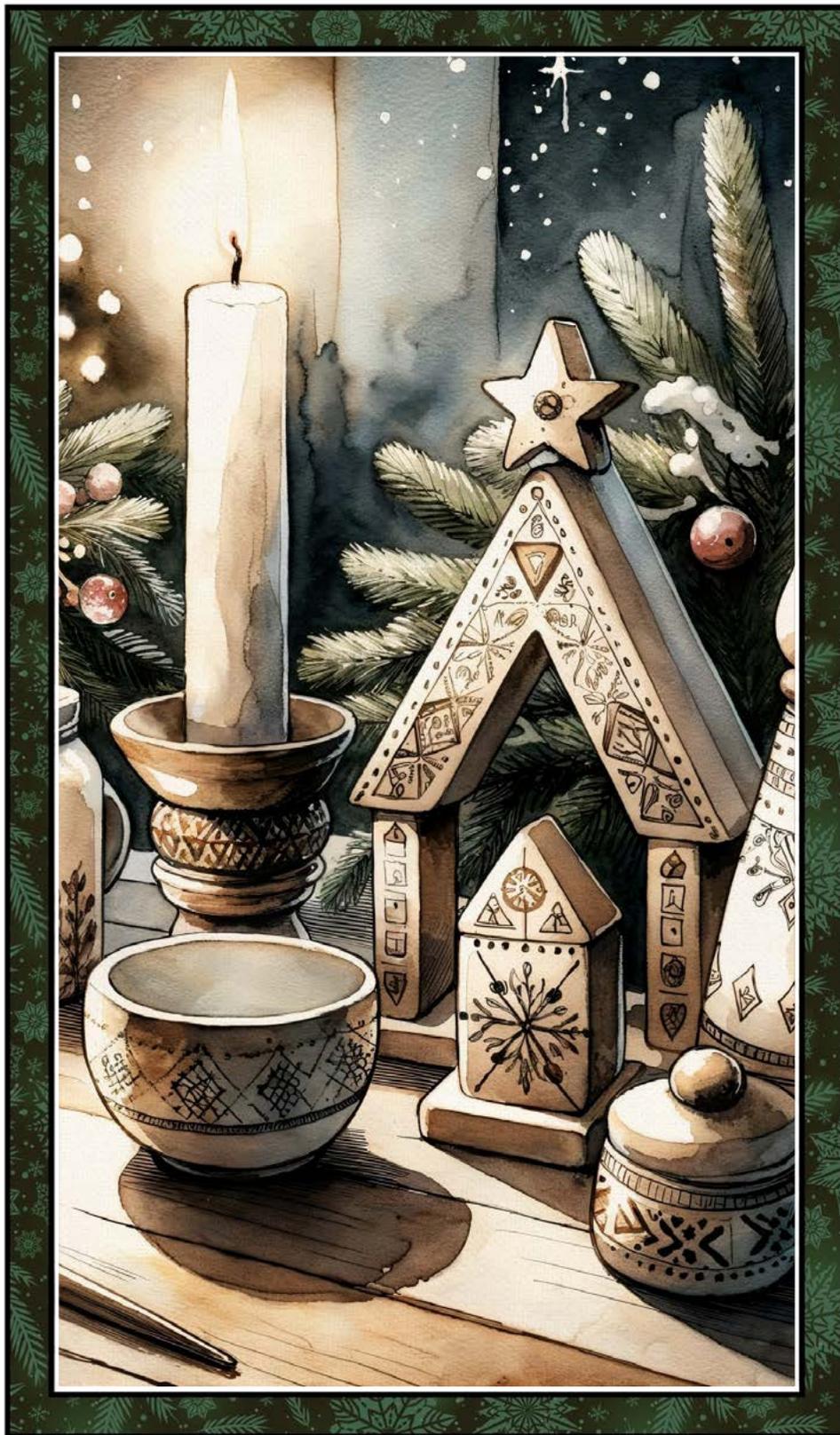


COLOR A PICTURE OF YOUR FAVORITE GODDESS

Mother's Night is a natural time to get to know some of our Goddesses. If you have little ones at home, you can introduce them and get acquainted tonight. Find a picture of some of your favorite Goddesses, print them out, and color them. You can also use your imagination to create a representation of the Goddesses you favor.

Some suggestions of goddesses to honor tonight are Frigga, Freya, Sif, Sigyn, Nanna, Nerthus, Sunna, or Jord. If you don't feel connected to any goddess, you might like to create images of the Norns or the Matronae.

Once you have created your images, you can use the finished pieces to add to your altar.



DISIR ALTAR

Throughout the 12 Days of Yule, we will create an altar together, and each day, we will add something to it to represent the theme of that day. On this first night, you might create a separate Disir or Ancestor Altar. I work with my ancestors daily, so I already have one set up.

It is nice to set up an Ancestor altar for the positive and helpful women of your family who have passed by placing pictures of them, prayer cards, or symbols that remind you of them, or mothers in general, on the altar. If you don't have fond memories of female Ancestors, then place symbols of what having a good relationship with a mother figure would look like in your life. Then you can ask your more ancient Ancestors who are well in spirit to come to your aid or make themselves known so you can work with them to begin healing the mother line wounds.

Alternatively, you can dedicate this night, altar, and offerings to a specific Goddess that is important to your family. Remember to add the pictures of your favorite Goddesses to the altar.

I have a special relationship with Sif and my daughter with Freya, so we always honor them and leave them offerings on Mother's Night. If you are new to all of this and unsure which Goddess to choose, you can dedicate this night to Frigga, the All-Mother.

Place a candle, an offering plate or small dish, and a small cup on the altar to hold your cookie offerings and a libation. I like to give turmeric or saffron-infused milk with honey as my libation offering.

Milk is deeply associated with motherhood, and the golden color is a nice addition to kick off Winter Solstice, a solar celebration.

Just a word of caution here: remember it is a good rule of thumb only to invite your Ancestors who are well in spirit, even if you don't know their names. I have written the prayer so that it doesn't matter whether you know the names.

You may also choose to add incense to the invoking ritual. Many of my ancestors were Catholic, so I sometimes use frankincense and myrrh, scents they would be familiar with from holy days when they occupied this earthly plane.

Both substances are also good at keeping away negativity or malicious spirits that may be hanging out near the doorway when you invite your healthy Ancestors to join your celebration. I also like using juniper, a familiar scent used by my Scottish ancestors for saining or purifying a space. But you might want to use another fragrance that has meaning.



Creating Your Yule Altar

Here are some simple instructions for setting up your Yule Altar. Make sure it is in a place where everyone can access it and a large enough space to place twelve symbols and a candle. I like to choose a big candle that can be used every night when we tend our altar. But you could also use small individual tea lights for each night, letting them burn all the way down. You can make your altar as elaborate or simple as you wish.

1. Cleanse the space where you're setting up the altar, perhaps with some incense like mugwort or juniper or by sprinkling salt water over the surface.
2. Set an intention for the altar; it can be as simple as one word.
3. If you like, place a cloth as the base.
4. Arrange photos, mementos of ancestors, or any other seasonal decorations you want to incorporate.
5. Set up a candle ready to be lit during the nightly ritual.

MOTHER'S NIGHT ACTIVITIES

Bake your cookies, and while they are cooling, you might like to do a simple braiding ritual to weave together the themes of this special night.

Braiding Ritual

Braiding, a tradition deeply rooted in many cultures, symbolizes the interconnectedness of our past, present, and future. Just as the Norns weave the threads of fate for every being, braiding intertwines individual strands to create something stronger and unified.

This simple yet profound act connects us to ancient practices while reminding us of the intertwined nature of our own lives and legacies.

Materials:

Three different colored threads or thin yarn (each color representing past, present, and future)

Instructions:

1. Tie the three threads together at one end.
2. Intertwine or braid the threads, thinking about the journey of your ancestors, your current path, and the future of your lineage.
3. Once braided, tie off the other end and hang this braid on your Disir altar, or wear it as a bracelet throughout the Yuletide season.

ALTAR

Once you have created your braid and baked your cookies, you can perform the ritual for tonight that includes offerings to the ancestors and placing your first item on your Yule Altar.

1. Begin by lighting the candles.
2. As you place the cookie offering and representation of the Goddess, say the Mother's Night Prayer (see below).
3. After the prayer, sit silently for a moment, meditating on the idea of the Disir watching over your lineage.
4. Conclude the ritual by thanking the Disir and ancestors for their guidance and protection.
5. Over the following days, the altar will be built upon, but this foundational setting remains crucial.

I wrote this prayer to use after I light my candle and incense and welcome my Ancestors by name, using their full names or specific genealogy so other spirits can't be confused by who you are calling forth. But again, use caution with who you invite in, and feel free not to use specific names.

MOTHER'S NIGHT PRAYER

Spirits of all the vibrant, well, and healed Mothers who have come before me, {state your full name}

Great Disir, Ancestors, Grandmothers

Going back to the beginning of my female line,

I honor you today.

I thank you for your gifts of

Body & Blood,

Strength & Hope.

I thank you for life itself.

Help me to do right by you,

To honor you with this life you have given me,

Let me never take for granted all the blessings & abundance

Which surrounds me & my family.

Help me to be a good Mother, Wife, Daughter & Sister

Help me to pass on a legacy of kindness, love, hope & strength of spirit to my descendants. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

So shall it be.

Mother's Night is an annual reminder of the rich tapestry of wisdom, love, and strength that our maternal lineage offers us. By acknowledging them, celebrating their lives, and inviting their presence into our homes, we ensure that their spirit lives on, guiding and nurturing us as we journey through our lives.

For those of us who are mothers or hold maternal roles in others' lives, this night also prompts a moment of introspection. How do we wish to be remembered? What legacy of love, wisdom, and strength do we aim to weave for future generations? This night allows us to set intentions to aspire to be the guiding matriarchs of tomorrow. While not everyone is a mother, everyone plays a part in the grand tapestry of life, and every thread, every stitch matters. Let's cherish and honor the memories, lessons, and love of the past and sow seeds for a luminous legacy for the generations yet to come.

RECIPES

Scottish Shortbread

There are three shortbread styles, yet the name is derived from earlier versions of the cookie, which was, in fact, yeasted bread sprinkled with sugar. First is the rectangular shape, known as fingers. The second are slices cut from a large circle, and the third is circular, known as rounds. Traditionally, rounds are decorated by pinching the exterior with the thumb and forefinger or making cut marks with a knife to create sun-like rays, likely a surviving tradition from the Scots' earlier sun-worshipping days.



Traditional shortbread only has three ingredients: butter (the most important), flour, and sugar. For best results, it's essential to use cold butter and be gentle with the dough by not working it too much.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cold salted butter (by using salted butter, you do not need to add salt)
- ½ cup superfine sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (gluten-free works well here)

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.
2. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
3. Place all ingredients in a large bowl.
4. Mix with an electric mixer until thoroughly combined and dough forms. Or you can use your hands to knead the dough until it sticks together if you make a ball.
5. On a cool floured surface, roll the dough to about ¼ inch thickness.
6. Use biscuit cutters or the top of a round glass to cut out the rounds and create the sun rays using your fingers or a knife.
7. Place rounds on prepared baking sheets.
8. Pierce with a fork.
9. Bake for 20 minutes or until just lightly browned.
10. Cool on a wire rack.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a Mythologist and Scribe of The Old Ones, I translate the unspoken words of the unseen world into stories that captivate our imagination and stir us to come into right relationship with the world and all its inhabitants.

As an Anthropologist, I distill those esoteric experiences down to their essence to create various practical frameworks to inspire you to create your own simple daily rituals and traditions that you can apply today to become re-enchanted with the world around you. These traditions can then be left as a legacy to the ones who come after us.

Street Cred

I'm a two-time best-selling author. I have a degree in Anthropology and Indigenous/Native American Studies from Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. I studied Culinary Arts at Sterling College in Craftsbury, VT. I've taught cooking classes to children and adults. This led me to develop a program for Vermont members of WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) to make the best use of their food program and I was involved in their Farm to Food program.

My husband and I renovated and ran a homestead in Vermont for almost 10 years. Through this experience we acquired the skills to grow our own food, herbs, and raise animals. I've been working with herbs and creating my own remedies since the early 90's.

I have lived in Italy, Norway, Belgium, and the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. As a Third Road Initiate, and through self-study of the esoteric arts I have decades worth of experiences creating rituals and family traditions.

Find me:

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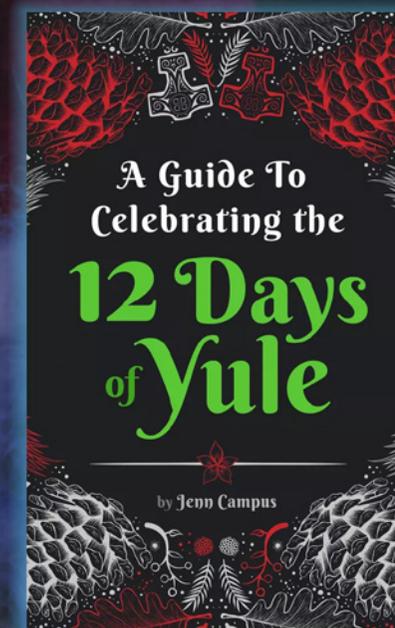
Thank you for reading the first chapter of “*A Guide to Celebrating the 12 Days of Yule: (Heathen-style!): Folklore, Activities and Recipes For The Whole Family to Enjoy For 12 Days!*”

I hope you enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Thanks,
Jenn

Follow me at: jenncampusauthor.com

THE IDEAL GUIDE ON HOW TO CELEBRATE YULE



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