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## How to Honor Your Wicca Deity

Wiccan Practitioners usually have an altar in their home (inside or outside) where they honor the Goddess and God. Certain Wiccan groups believe that the Deities are all one although they may be worshipped as separate entities or energies.

The altar usually includes figurines, candles and sometimes tools that represent the Deities. The Deities are invoked with mental powers and invited to stay for the rituals. After the spell, the Deities are thanked and their energies are allowed to leave. The energy of the Deity is believed to exist in the figurines or candles during the time that they are invoked and allowed to stay.

Wiccans often celebrate the existence of the power of the Deities in everyday life. The Moon and Sun are believed to be associated with the Goddess and the God energies. Wearing jewelry in the shape of the Moon or the Sun and decorating the house or person with similar symbols are used in many Wiccan traditions to invoke the powers of the Deities for protection.

One of the most important ways that Wiccans honor their deities is by celebrating the Sabbats which coincide with the Lunar or Solar cycles. Eight major festivals, spaced at even intervals during the year are celebrated by Wiccans. These festivals are called Sabbats and they are seen as the days designated for celebrating the cycles of life, death and rebirth.

There are also other celebrations that are held during the full or new moon which are usually smaller gatherings, usually at night and held outdoors. These are called Esbats.





Samhain, the last harvest of the year is usually held in the Northern Hemisphere (the southern hemisphere follows a similar natural calendar tuned to their harvest cycles).

The next celebration is the Yule or Winter Rite which is followed by Imbolc or Brigid's day. Brigid is the Celtic Goddess of Fire, poetry, healing, childbirth and Unity who is celebrated as a powerful Triple Goddess. Some Wiccans create a bed or resting place in their house for this Deity.

Ostara or Festival of Trees is the time Easter is celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere. This holiday is named after the Goddess Ostara and symbolizes the rejoining of the Goddess with her lover-consort. Ostara is also considered to be the virgin Goddess of Spring. It is considered bad luck to wear new clothes before Ostara, and people work through the winter to make new clothes that they can wear on this day. This may be the reason there is so much emphasis on new clothes for Easter. Lambs and Rabbits were part of the ancient Ostara celebration and they too seem to have been passed over to the current Easter holiday festivities.

Beltane is usually celebrated as May Day in recent decades. In some areas of the world, this marked the beginning of the summer season when farm animals are allowed to graze on the pastures that have returned after the cold winter season. Bonfires are lit on mountains and hills and houses are decorated with May Boughs and May bushes. The cattle are sometimes driven through the bonfires to purify them. Sometimes the people themselves run through the bonfires to cleanse and energize themselves to be more productive through the year. Wiccans usually celebrate Beltane as a ritual reunion of the Goddess (the Lady) and God. The focus is usually on fertility which symbolizes more produce, increased livestock and the resulting increased prosperity.

Midsummer celebrations are conducted around the summer solstice because ancient cultures believed that mid-summer plants had miraculous and healing powers if they are picked on this night. Bonfires are lit to protect the people from undesirable or evil powers that were believed to roam around the land. This festival is also sometimes celebrated as a sacrifice time for the sake of fertility and prosperity of the land. This holiday is celebrated in many parts of the world including

Lughnasadh is also a sabbat celebrated by Wiccans as well as pagans to celebrate the start of autumn or the harvest season. This celebration is marked by the harvest of fruits, community gatherings, festivals, etc. The Celts believed that God Lugh or Goddess





Carmun started this tradition. Dancing around bonfires as well as ritual blessing of the fields for the bountiful harvests are the usual ways to celebrate this festival.

Mabon is another festival that is usually held around the end of September. This symbolizes gratitude or thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth. This signifies the end of the harvest season and a corn dolly would be created and paraded through the village. This doll is then drenched with water to ensure good rains for the next year.

As we can see, Wiccans do not worship the Goddess and God; they celebrate Nature in all its glory while thanking the Deities for their continued guidance for enabling this bounty.

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