

S u m m e r

Fire

The Buck Moon



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The Buck Moon

It is the full moon in July that has been called the Buck Moon or Thunder Moon. Summer is in full swing and this can bring turbulent weather. To most of eastern North America, you may see this in the form of long humid days followed by afternoons filled with the rumble, bang, boom of summer thunderstorms. On the west coast, from late June into September, it is known as monsoon season where a welcomed downpour quickly turns into lightning, hail, thunder, and floods as the thirsty land of sand and stone cannot drink every drop.

Regardless of where you live, when the fiery energy of the sun builds up, we hear the drums of the land spirits pounding away in the night sky sending us messages. Are we listening? Has life gotten so busy that we do not hear the cries of nature calling us back to her?

As summer peaks, the velvety antlers of male deer, which first begin to sprout in early spring, finish growing into their final glory. The sight of their magnificent antlers against the summer sky may have led Algonquin people--prominent along the Atlantic Coast and along the Great Lakes to call this the Full Buck Moon.

The buck is the master of the forest as his energy is nimble and silent, quick, and sleek also very soft and gentle. But just as the thunder, he can come out of nowhere and rattle the night, and just as quickly disappear.

The Anglo-Saxon name is Hay Moon after the hay harvest that takes place in July. Those of us with allergies will be familiar with the symptoms of hay fever which got its name from the fever-like, but non-viral symptoms experienced when grass plants like hay are stirred.

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Another name for this moon is the Wort Moon. In sixteenth century England, the word wort was a popular way of saying plant, herb, or vegetable used for food or medicine; often a pot herb. This indicates that July is the time to gather herbs (worts) to dry and use as spices and remedies.

The original meaning of the word wort survives today in the names of many of our medicinal herbs. Saint Johns Wort is a widely used herb that is harvested when the yellow flowers are in full bloom on Saint John's Day-- which falls near summer solstice. Many other medicinal herbs still have wort in their name: motherwort, soapwort, mugwort, feverwort, to name a few.

Another folk tradition that survives today, harkens back to this moon is the use of fermentation as means to preserve food, both by pickling and by creating aerated and alcoholic beverages such as ale. There was once a time of fierce debate as to what ale was the best; hops ale or wort (herb) ale. For many centuries, ale had been brewed by women called alewives. The word wife has a long history from old to middle English first meaning "women", then "mistress of the house" and later "tradeswoman of humble rank". These are the root meanings of the words, midwife, housewife, herbwife, wortwife, and the saying old wives tales. Not unlike a witch, a tradeswoman such as an alewife, wortwife, or midwife would have had a special connection to her natural world.

You may also hear the names Raspberry Moon, Salmon Moon, and Ripe Corn Moon.

And yet another name is sometimes the Mead Moon as honey and bees are a prominent symbol this time of year.

Celebration Ideas

This cycle reminds us to remain in our power.

- Dance (safely) in the rain.
- Spend time in the woods. If you are still and quiet, do you see a deer or other animal? Does it have a message?
- Rekindle your power and learn how to stand firmly by your goals and beliefs.
- Spend time outside at dusk and notice how late the sun is out. The days will slowly grow shorter.
- Practice being in the moment.
- Go to the beach or try mixing water and fire magic.

Sources

Sophia Center for Goddess Study Priestess Training Class handouts by Dr. Candace Kant, Professor of History

Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger for Connection by Jessica Prentice

Stepping Into Ourselves: An anthology of Writings on Priestesses by Anne Key & Candace Kant

The Old Farmer's Almanac

...and various other sources collect over 20 years. Some are printed, some are handwritten, while others are scribbled on a napkin. I've had many teachers over the years and many of my biggest inspirations came from simple conversations and gatherings rather than formal lessons or rituals. Because of this, I may not always have every source of information but if you recognize something, I would be happy to include and/or link to the original source.