

W i n t e r

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The Cold Moon



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The Cold Moon

December's full Moon is most commonly known as the Cold Moon—a Mohawk name that conveys the frigid conditions of this time of year, when cold weather truly begins to grip us. This full Moon has also been called the Long Night Moon (Mohican), as it rose during the “longest” nights of the year, which are near the December Winter Solstice.

When Mother nature is wrapped in winter's dark shadow, she puts on a spectacular show for anyone willing to brave the cold. The stillness of the frozen air heightens each of the senses, making the little details of a glimmering blanket of snow or a cardinal's song even more inspiring. This time of year is often frigid in most parts of the northern hemisphere but the coldest days may be yet to come. Long nights, snow, and cold winds can all call us to keep indoors next to a steady warm fire. Today's modern culture doesn't allow us time to be alone in the dark with our thoughts. Instead, we sit in front of screens and turn on our artificial lights which tricks our circadian rhythm into a perpetual state of eternal summer.

Many of us have never even been able to escape to an area where there is no light pollution and where we are able to fully see the night's sky in all it's glory. Throughout December, the constellation Orion is visible midway between sunset and midnight. Like all the starry sky, Orion rises earlier each evening, and, by late December, Orion is seen at nightfall or early evening. Mars has been visible for some time and will still be brilliant this time of year. It can be seen as a bright reddish-orange dot just to the side of the moon.

Other names: Bitter Moon, Christmas Moon, Twelfth Moon, Moon Before Yule/Moon After Yule, Younger Hard Time Moon, Dark Night Moon, Moon of Mistletoe, Oak Moon, Ýlir Moon, Joulukuu Moon, and Moon of Long Nights.

Celebration Ideas

Now, the days become longer.

- Decorate your home with sacred plants connected with Winter: evergreen wreaths & boughs, mistletoe, holly, and ivy.
- Reflect on blessings of joy, renewal, and well-wishes as you decorate.
- Meditate on the rising and/or setting sun. Note its position on the horizon at this time of year and observe its change in position on the horizon as the days start lengthening.
- Feed the animals. String popcorn or berries and decorate an outdoor tree. Craft a bird feeder and hang it as an offering.
- Tell legends or stories around the fire. Tell the story of the Holly King or another Solstice legend.
- Create a circle of candles. You might decide to honor the four corners – North, South, East and West – and what they each bring into your lives.
- Host a Spiral Walk where the center holds a candle or fire. Take turns walking into the center, light your candle, then journey outward just as the sun does on solstice night.

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.