

W i n t e r
E a r t h

The Wolf Moon



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The Wolf Moon

The Wolf Moon comes in the deep of winter when much of the North is covered in snow. At this time of year, we take refuge in our homes, staying close to the fire and warmth as the winds and wolves howl outside. Living off of the food that had been harvested in the autumn, it would begin to become scarce now and we would have needed to supplement with hunting for wild game. The wolf symbolizing hunger, appetite, or famine dates back to at least the fifteenth century.

The Wolf Moon is thought to be named after howling wolves, which may stem from the Anglo-Saxon lunar calendar. Other names: Moon After Yule, Old Moon, Ice Moon, Snow Moon, Bone Moon, and the Hunger Moon.

In the deep of winter, many parts of the North have been covered in snow for many moons already. The name Hunger Moon has been used in many cultures but often for the same reason-- the frozen land yielded little to eat. It was at this time that people would search for berried treasures such as root vegetables. Or, take to making foods from bones, using the nutritious marrow as a way to survive.

Foods that had been preserved were being eaten now. Fruits and vegetables that could last in the cellars were often consumed. Apples, though a little soft would be a staple in some diets along with turnips and pumpkins. Winter greens such as cabbage would have been welcomed nourishment too.

While you can still see your breath in the cold air, there may have been a touch of hope as new animals were being born where domestication had taken place. This provided the first taste of fresh milk but also the fear that it might have attracted hungry wolves.

The Wolf Moon

Now food has become less scarce in modern times and we can often depend on having enough for winter by simply heading to the grocery store, we have driven the symbolism of the hungry wolf from our lives. We have also driven the majestic creatures from most of the land, and in doing so, driving the wildness from our hearts. Wolves were once the most abundant mammals in North America but by the 1970s they had become an endangered species.

The development in the American West of large tracks of rangeland for sheep and cattle, and the widespread practice on the part of ranchers of shooting predators on sight, contributed to the wolf's demise. Urban development and agriculture steadily eroded the large areas of wilderness and natural habitats where wolves and other wild animals thrived. While many animals were wiped out, many were also domesticated. We, too, become more and more domesticated having removed ourselves from our wild hearts.

This is the time when over-domestication coupled with an itch to get outside may cause us to become more aware of our own wild and instinctual animal nature.

Often called the wild woman archetype, it is an expression of the innate, soulful essence. Many women become socialized in a way that leads them to be overly civilized and domesticated from the very moment they're born. This domestication affects the way a woman expresses herself. The wild woman archetype is the first pattern of a woman before any culturalization or exposure to society takes place.

Celebration Ideas

This time reminds us to embrace nature's natural cycles and rhythms. As she sleeps under a blanket of soft snow, we know she will soon be awakened.

- Make a vision board.
- Set goals for the next 12 months.
- Do a Year Ahead Tarot Spread and pull 12 cards, one for each month.
- Awaken your inner Wild Woman/Person
- Connect with the energy of the snow or snow spirits.
- Collect snow and allow it to melt into snow water. Use in workings for new beginnings, fresh starts, purity, and cleansing.
- Feed the birds. Check with your local Audubon Society for guidelines.
- Work with Witch Hazel as it blossoms bright yellow flowers in winter.
- Go on a walk in the woods. Notice the beauty of a winter wonderland. See if you can find any early signs of spring.
- Take a scenic drive to a river or stream. Observe if it is frozen over or how the ice naturally develops.
- Write down a bad habit on paper and freeze it to rid yourself of something unwanted. Either outside or in the freezer.
- Dig a hole in the snow, add candle wick, and pour melted candle wax inside to make snow candles.
- Howle at the Full Moon.
- Make hand-dipped candles
- Craft a Brigid's Cross

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.