

# Samhain

**"I feel the nights stretching away thousands long behind the days, til they reach the darkness where all of me is Ancestor."**

**-Annie Finch**



Our journey begins in the dark; both of the moon and the solar year. We enter in when the veil is thin, for Samhain season is upon us. This portal is seen as a time to honor and connect with your ancestors and other guiding spirits; to honor their presence in your life and the memories you hold of them. It has been referred to as the Witches New Year and perhaps you celebrate it thus. Certainly I can see it being called such, as we enter the deepest, darkest time of the year where gestation occurs; seeds resting in the underbelly being nourished by the mother. Much as when we conceive a child or an idea; it is a spark of fire, of spirit and a beginning, though without final form, awaiting patiently its time of birth into matter. This is a time of deep wisdom and contemplation, knowing that transformation is upon us.

Today is Lunar Samhain, marked by the new moon in Scorpio. Solar Samhain varies from year to year and is the cross quarter between the Autumn Equinox and the Winter Solstice. These 2 dates create a Samhain "portal" where the energy of the dark season is amplified. This year we step into them both on the same day. What a potent and auspicious beginning to our journey.

Samhain sits on the fixed energy line of mid Scorpio. The days are getting shorter and Winter is on the heels of Autumn. We look to the earth for guidance and see that the time for reflection and regeneration is upon us. We are pulling our energy in for rest. When we pull in our outer energy, our inner senses have space to more fully awaken. A death is occurring as the darkness grows heavy and we are ready. We know that both darkness and death are necessary to hold the light and carry it to birth. When our energy is drawn in in this way it allows time for dreaming and visioning. Time for tapping into the wisdom within. This descent requires the courage to let go of outworn patterns to create space to receive what is coming. In Celtic Cultures and certain earth based traditions, Samhain marked both the end and beginning of the year. You may feel this as right in the bones of you. I personally do not celebrate Samhain as my new year, but the Winter Solstice that follows it with the "rebirth" of the Sun when the tipping point of the Sun shifts and begins to grow stronger once again. For me, this feels right and good. Samhain feels like deep rest; honoring myself and my loved ones past and seeking their guidance as I move forward. Time to take stock of all that has been gathered and sit with it, allowing truths to be revealed so that I can let "die" what is no longer serving me, making space for what is to

come with the new year. This is the beauty of the Witch. I take what feels right for me, not what someone else has told me is the *Way*, but rather what speaks to my heart as Witch~ and I move into that. What speaks to yours?

Many cultures around the world honor the darkness, death and decay that occurs around this time with a myriad of celebrations and festivals. October 31<sup>st</sup>, which is the cultural celebration of Halloween bears no cosmic or earth related significance that I know of; at least not anymore. (If you know otherwise, please share. I'd love to learn.) I believe about a thousand years ago it correlated with an astronomical star system, the Pleiades. In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1st as All Souls, All Saints or All Hallows Day to coincide with the peoples celebrations and incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain, the Celtic feast of the dead and one of the 4 great cross quarter fire festivals. The quarter festivals are the Equinoxes and Solstices and the cross quarters fall directly between them. It is said that the pagan people celebrated their holy days on the Eve; hence All Hallows Eve. Many have written that the Popes decision was an attempt at the further conversion of the people and their rites by replacing their festivals with a church sanctioned holiday. I have never discovered the true significance of the date of 10/31 but am aware that myths from all over the world have traditions and folklore around this season and taking time to research your lineage is a great way to tap into how your ancestors held space this time of year. I can only surmise that the original honoring did indeed take place at the cross quarter, as our ancestors were much closer to the cycles of the earth, moon and stars and it makes sense that they would have used them as their true calendars.

Astrologically, this places Samhain at mid-Scorpio and Lunar Samhain at the closest dark moon to that point. These festivals and holy days have purpose and deeper meaning and are not randomly assigned. There is both science and spirit behind them all. That being said however, the "deeper meaning" can show up differently for all of us. Just as I choose not to hold Samhain as my new year, you may choose not to hold it at all and celebrate the holy day that derives from your people or speaks to your heart. I present it here as a way to unfold the layers of mystery. You take what you need, change what you want and leave the rest. Halloween owes its roots to Samhain, and for many October 31st is the only date they are aware to connect. With the awareness of the cosmic significance of the cross quarter, or that the dark moon of Lunar Samhain correlates with the time of dark sun, this could heighten our sensitivity to the thinning veils. However, celebrating Samhain on the 31st does not lessen its value. It is with the intention of our hearts that truly sets our holy days.

Lunar Samhain falling on this dark moon of Scorpio speaks to us of the depths that are calling. We are being asked to dance with our shadows and feel into our watery emotions. Scorpio supports us in bringing up our heart matter.

Consider our entry into this Companionship during this Samhain portal an opportunity to deeply explore your inner world. Contact your bone wisdom and uncover any subtle (or not so subtle) conditioning that you carry that may relate to this journey. Be curious of the "masks" you have been donning. Seek guidance from your ancestors and spirit guides for the veil is thin and they are waiting. Perhaps they have messages for you in relation to this 13 moons. Create space for gathering and nurturing new ideas and visions to incubate in the dark time. Regeneration happens in the dark.

I encourage you to feel into what this season brings up for you. Do not confine yourself to a day just because I say so or a book says so. Look to your heart. Look to the stars. Look to the moon. Pay attention to that inner knowing of you and follow the signs. How is the weather? Listen to your soul speak. Consider Samhain a season rather than a day and see if that speaks to you. Utilize your journal to uncover the layers of Samhain in your heart.

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### Honor

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Ideas to spark your Samhain season:

- Set up an Ancestral altar to honor your lineage and loved ones past. Include all items that call to your heart, such as photos and other imagery, objects of significance and remembrance as well as bits of nature that call you to reflect on the season. Write them letters and set on your Altar to either read aloud or burn them if you feel inspired knowing they will receive your words.
  - Take walks in the dark, contemplating any fears of darkness that you hold and where they stem from. If it feels available for you, allow them to drop down into your feet and leave them behind in the earth as you walk away.
  - Visit an Elder and listen to their stories. Make them their favorite dish. If you have no Elders to share this space with, visit an elderly home and bring gifts of treats. This dark time of year is for the crone. She has been neglected and put aside. Let us honor the wisdom she holds with an offering of our time and heartspace.
  - If it is available to you, light a Samhain fire and offer to the flames what needs transformation. If you choose to do this rite, take time to create space for the ceremony that will honor the magic.
  - Practice your favorite art of divination. Call in your guides and see what messages come to you at this time.
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The list of ways to celebrate and honor this season is infinite. Tap into the bones of you and see what comes in.

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