

Summer Solstice

“Summer is the time when one sheds one’s tensions with one’s clothes, and the right kind of day is jeweled balm for the battered spirit. A few of those days and you can become drunk with belief that all is right with the world.”

~Ada Louise Huxtable



When the sun enters Cancer, we welcome what has been called Midsummer’s Day or Midsummer’s Eve, the longest day and shortest night of the year. Like its cross quarter opposite the wheel, it holds a spectacular polarity of honoring this high point in the sun’s cycle while also celebrating the return of the dark.

In the northern hemisphere it is literally the longest day. In the Arctic Circle they have a baffling 24 hours of sunlight. It is the pinnacle of the sun’s power and yet the wheel turns. From here on out, the days will grow shorter.

Because of the dichotomy of this season, Summer Solstice can be enjoyed and honored as a dual festivity. Like the Full Moon, which is the mirror or microcosm, it is both a celebration of all that has been revealed and expressed through the outward cycle of the sun and the gentle exhale as we return to the dark.

At this peak of Summer, nature’s growth can be seen in her evident expressions. Manifestation is in full effect. Trees are abundant with leaf and blossom, herbs and vegetables are thriving, and fruits and grains are unfolding into their swelling bodies. The world sings a bountiful song. Likewise, the Summer Solstice is the apogee of our own expression and expansiveness. It is a time to celebrate the ALL of you; who you are and what you’ve accomplished over this last full cycle of the wheel. Shine a bright light on your joy! This can also be a powerful time to work magic towards intentions you wish to bring focus to. The strength and power of the sun can create an incredible activation process. Consider those swelling grains and the new seed within. The sun’s cycle has changed and an alchemical transformation has begun. Fulfillment and power reign while uniting the active and receptive principles of nature.

The spirit of Solstice transforms and energizes. Give thanks and play hard.

Honor

•Take time to honor both the great light and the coming again of the dark. All pieces are valuable and a necessary part of the whole. A simple way to do this is to wake and watch the sunrise and truly celebrate the day with revelry, and then sing her a lullaby as she sets, honoring and welcoming in this next half of the year.

•Celebrate with friends and family. Light fires, make music, dance, feast! Celebrate in big ways!

•Stay up all night. Camp out if the weather is nice. If the moon is bright it may light your whole evening until the sun comes up.

•Create an altar or shrine to the Sun, or perhaps paint a mask or cloth that can invoke the power of light within you when the darkness feels overwhelming to keep you through the winter months.

•The sun's potency is at its height! Cleanse and charge your crystals and/or make sun water or tea. You can add specific herbs related to the solstice (elderflower, lemon balm and st john's wort to name a few) and even water safe crystals to your elixir.

•Take a walk, either alone or with friends and family. Soak in the warmth of the summer day or evening. Begin your walk in silence to honor the mysteries that we are blessed to partake in with the turning of the wheel. Pay attention and be in awe of nature that is happening around you. Listen to the birds singing and the leaves dancing in the wind. Pick long grasses and flowers (ask permission and say thank you) to make wreaths and crowns to wear to honor the day.

•If you're outside and can have a fire, create reverence when you first light your flames. If you are with a group, share what you have gained or feel accomplishment in since the Winter Solstice. Offer gratitude for your abundance. Speak to what you hope for in the coming months. This day offers us a strong signal that change is coming but also gives us the gift of time to prepare for that change. Focus on what needs to be attained or realized before we descend once again into the inner cycle of the year and the inner cycle of our beings. If possible, jump the fire! This can be a powerful ritual of gratitude and release. As you leap over the fire call out what you are thankful for. Jump again to let go of anything you wish to release, anything that is no longer serving you. Give it to the fire to burn away and cleanse and purify you for the phase to come. Support your fellow fire jumpers with cheers and calls of encouragement.

•Cheers to the Sun! Pass around some honey mead, considered a sacred solar drink by the druids and offer a salute and piece of gratitude to the sun and her gifts in the moment. Dance, drum and celebrate yourself at the height of this potent time. Celebrate your potential. Celebrate the dark and the change in direction that is coming.

No matter how you choose to celebrate the Summer Solstice, whether it is a romping revelry with friends or a quiet candlelit dinner followed by a walk with the sunset, the key word is *celebrate*. Celebrate YOU. Honor YOU. Give gratitude for your strength and your magic and your love and your courage to walk this earth and be alive.

*All images are property of Ashley Hallmark and Copyright Gathered and Found. Please do not share or reproduce any of this material, other than for your personal use in this Companionship.