



# SAMHAIN

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## *Ancestral Journey Guide*

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## *Preparation for our Journey*

We will be gathering together for the full moon cycle in the season of Samhain. We begin our journey on the new moon or what is known as Lunar Samhain on November 13, 2023. This is the New Moon in Scorpio and ushers in the lunar threshold of Samhain and the beginning of the Celtic New Year. We will meet every Monday (on the day dedicated to the Moon).

The Gregorian Calendar looks at Samhain as a static holiday beginning on the evening of October 31 to the evening of November 1. You will sense the ancient echoes of this holiday in our modern and commercialized holiday of Halloween. Feel free to set up your altar and spend time there on this night. I cherish my time at the altar of my ancestors after I've taken my children trick-or-treating and tucked them into bed. I light candles and stare into the beautiful photos of my ancestors and feel them surrounding us. Please know there are many ways of looking at the dates of Samhain, which are mentioned later on. Choose what feels right for you. I am looking forward to gathering on the Lunar celebration of this sacred time to guide you on a journey into the ancestral realms.

To prepare for your journey, I've compiled some suggestions and resources to guide you. More than anything, I invite you to listen to your own guidance and intuition and practice discernment.

Thank you for being here and for honoring your ancestors and beloveds.  
Enjoy this mystical and magical time.



# Altars, Photos, and Ancestors

To embody the beauty of this sacred time of year, I invite you to create an ancestral or Samhain altar. This can be a sacred space in your home or even a small corner on your desk or bookshelf. The space itself does not matter except for the intention you weave for it.

Begin by finding a space for you to tend to in your surroundings.

Clear the space of any clutter - physical clutter and energetic.

I do not recommend using white sage as it is a heavily threatened and endangered species, not to mention its use is cultural appropriation unless you are Indigenous. Instead, I look for plant allies that would have grown naturally on the lands of my ancestors or native plants/herbs that grow in my own garden or backyard. You can burn these to clear space. A personal favorite of mine is rosemary. Reach out if you would like suggestions. You can learn more about the loss of sage from commercialism, capitalism, and climate change [here](#).

Call upon your ancestors as you clear and create this space.

Bless this space and allow it to be a special gathering space for the spirits of your beloved dead.

Follow your own guidance as you create your altar. Foster your intuitive sense and connection with your ancestors. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to create an altar.



## *Altars, Photos, and Ancestors*

Once the space is cleared and you have set your intention, begin to add items of significance and love to your altar.

This is the space where you can display photos of your beloved family and friends who have passed.

Other items you can include:

- Trinkets, jewelry, or items passed down from ancestors
- A small cup or bowl offering water or food for the ancestors
- Hand-written love notes or prayers
- Candles
- Crystals
- Flowers
- Nuts, acorns, dried leaves from Nature

I love to have my grandma's handkerchiefs (or "hankies" as she called them) on my altar along with the play dishes I have from her mother, my great grandmother. If you don't have any items from your family, do not worry. You can write out poems, notes, and memories here as well. The invitation is for you to be creative, intuitive, and connected.



# *Herstory of Samhain*

In reclaiming our herstory, we can begin to unravel the webs of colonization and control that have been influential to us. For this herstory, I am speaking specifically of the Gaelic and Celtic traditions of my own ancestors. I have spent time studying, learning, unlearning, and reclaiming their practices and perspectives. This is an invitation for you to do the same. Begin by researching your own ancestral practices. It is a beautiful practice to be in.

## **The Wheel of the Year**

The passage of time in the Old Celtic tradition was symbolized by a wheel. Today we call this the "Wheel of the Year" and it symbolizes the ever-turning cycle and spiral of life, death, and regeneration/rebirth. The Celts viewed this wheel as being turned by a Great Crone Goddess in the Land of the Dead. In Ireland, this Goddess was Badb, "the boiling one", in Wales it was Arianrhod of the Silverhweel, in Cornwall it was Cerridwen.

Samhain is known as a Fire Festival and is a cross-quarter day on the Wheel of the Year. As Samhain is a liminal festival, like Beltane in May, it is said it is when the veils between the living world and the Otherworld are thin. Some Neolithic passage tombs in Ireland align with the sunrise at the time of Samhain. In ancient cultures, Samhain was also the time when the Pleiades climbed to their highest point in the sky at midnight.



# Herstory of Samhain

Other Names:

Hallowmas, Samain, Samana, Samhuinn, Sauin, Samonios, Calan Gaeaf

Dates Observed:

Gregorian Calendar: October 31

Dia de los Muertos (Mexico): November 1-2

All Soul's Day (Catholic): November 2

Lunar Date: New Moon in Scorpio

Solar Astrological Date: Sun, 15 degrees Scorpio

Colors:

Black

Orange

Symbols:

Cauldron

Jack-o-lantern

Masks and Costumes

Balefire or bonfire

Bowen knot



## *Herstory of Samhain*

In Celtic lore, Samhain was the night that the old God died, returning to the Land of the Dead to await rebirth at Yule/Winter Solstice.

People believed the veil between the world of the living and the dead was at its thinnest during this time which allowed the spirits of beloved ones who had passed to visit and join in ritual celebrations.

Practices:

The Feeding of the Dead: Favorite food and dishes for the dead were prepared and left out as offerings for them. Offer a libation of food in their name.

Candles in Windows and Altars: Candles were lit and left out to guide spirit pilgrims on this night.

Sharing Prayers and Stories: Invoke your beloved dead and speak with/to them. Share your favorite memories, express your grief or how you miss them, catch them up on your life and your family. Connect through your voice. Say a prayer. Offer your blessings and gratitude.

# Reflection Page

*What practices, rituals, and customs would you like to carry forward from your lineage?*

*How can you honor your beloved dead this year at Samhain?*

*Write out any prayers, wishes, memories, or moments of gratitude in the space below.*

A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, intended for writing reflections. It occupies the central portion of the page below the introductory text.



# Gratitude & Blessings

My intention is for this information to wrap you in a deeper layer of understanding of yourself and the cosmic energetics at play in your life.

May you use the wisdom of Samhain and your connection with your ancestors and dead to create intention, sacred space, and ritual in your life.

It is an honor to journey alongside of you in this sacred and spiritual season. I look forward to co-creating sacred space together, beginning on Lunar Samhain.

Thank you for all that you are, all that you are remembering, and all that you are becoming.

To your soul-led journey,  
Gretchen

