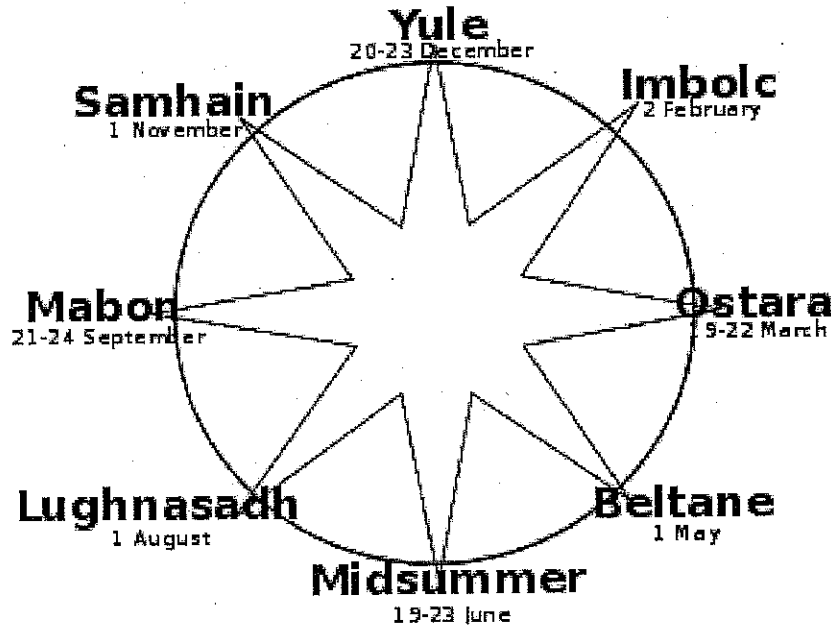


WICCA

Wicca is a belief system and way of life based upon the reconstruction of pre-Christian traditions originating in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. It is a contemporary Pagan religion with spiritual roots in the earliest expressions of reverence for nature. Practitioners of Wicca worship a Hunter God (traditionally the Horned God) and a Fertility Goddess (traditionally the Triple Goddess). They acknowledge the cycles of nature, the lunar phases and the seasons in celebrating their spirituality and worshipping the divine, with the intent of living in harmony and achieving balance. The elements of Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Aether—which combine to manifest all creation—provide insight to the rhythms of nature and human life. Wiccans have a very strict belief in the Law of Three, which states that whatever is sent out into the world shall be returned threefold, good and bad. With this in mind, there is hesitation in doing magick to harm or manipulate others, and Wiccans practice tolerance and acceptance toward all other religions, as long as those faiths do not persecute others or violate the tenant of “Harm None.” It is believed that there are some 800,000 practicing Wiccans in the world, mostly in the United Kingdom and North America, most of whom draw their inspiration from the *Book of Shadows*, a book of rituals and spells compiled by one of Wicca’s major figures, Gerald Brossseau Gardner (1884–1964).



The **WHEEL OF THE YEAR** is a Neopagan and Wiccan representation of the annual season of the earth’s symbols. These Sabbat festivals are spaced throughout the year and are based on pre-Christian Celtic and Germanic festivals.

ESSENTIAL NON-FICTION

GUILEY, Rosemary Ellen. (2008). *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft & Wicca*. 3rd. ed. Checkmark Books. ISBN 0-8160-7104-7. Grades 10 and up.

Written by an expert in the paranormal, this broad-ranging encyclopedia covers both historical witchcraft—such as the Salem witches, Santa Fe witches, and Stamford witches of the seventeenth century—and contemporary issues and concerns. Entries include different types of witchcraft, fairies, folk magic, the occult, pagan practices, voodoo or vodun, spells, demons, charms, and magic circles, all of which are clearly defined. It also contains biographies of both historical and fictional Wiccan figures, as well as explanations of rituals and practices related to witchcraft.

RAVENWOLF, Silver. (1998). *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation*. Llewellyn Publications. ISBN 1-5671-8725-0. Grades 8 and up.

This classic handbook presents everything from the Wiccan principles of belief, traditions, symbols, holidays and rituals, to spells for homework and dating. It has an introduction to ease parental concerns and describes witchcraft as “a nature-based, life-affirming religion that follows a moral code and seeks to build harmony among people, and empower the self and others.” This book clears up any misconceptions about the craft.

TELESCO, Patricia. (2004). *The Teen Book of Shadows: Star Signs, Spells, Potions, and Powers*. Citadel Publishing. ISBN 0-8065-2410-3. Grades 8 and up.

Geared towards teens, this introduction to Wicca explains witchcraft and divination, and provides straightforward information on journal-keeping (how to get started on your own Book of Shadows), sample spells and rituals for issues such as relieving stress and anger, as well as tips on how to explain Wicca to sceptical or nervous parents.



Drawn in a continuous line, the PENTACLE is the most common symbol used to identify Pagan or Wiccan belief. Based on numerology, the five points symbolize the four directions and elements, plus the Centre/Spirit.