



My Drift

Title: Witches

Written By: Jerry D. Petersen

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Where I got the idea to write about witches

Since I don't have a TV in my bedroom, I read and listen to the radio at night. The radio show I listen to is Coast to Coast AM that is on every night from 8PM to midnight in Hawaii. This late-night radio talk show deals with a variety of topics. Most frequently, the topics relate to either the paranormal or conspiracy theories. It was hosted by creator Art Bell from its inception in 1988 until 2003; the program is currently hosted by George Noory.

On Tuesday, January 13, 2026, Phoenix LeFae, a seasoned witch and root worker (an African American folk magic system that uses plants, herbs, and spiritual practices to heal, protect, or bring luck) was on the show. She addressed common misconceptions. LeFae emphasized that witchcraft is not evil but rather about empowerment and connection to nature. She also clarified the distinction between witchcraft and Wicca, noting that while related, they represent different traditions and practices. Describing coven life as "like-minded individuals coming together to perform and practice ritual," she said her coven often meets on full moons to support each other and their communities.

The guest discussed the cultural fear of witches, citing folklore such as Baba Yaga and the influence of Christianity in demonizing pagan practices. "The idea of the horned god being connected to the devil was used as a tool of conversion," she said. LeFae highlighted the diversity within witchcraft beliefs, from polytheism to atheism, and addressed the presence of Satanism as a separate entity focused on free will rather than devil worship. On the rise of witchcraft in popular culture, she expressed concern about the spread of misinformation on social media.

*On spellcasting, LeFae made a clear distinction: "I don't cast spells on people, but I do cast spells to help improve my life or others' lives if asked." She warned against negative magic, noting it causes harm to both target and caster. Discussing her new book, *Spirit Magic*, she explained that spirit is the animating force that connects all other elements (earth, air, fire, water) and is central to witchcraft practice. Simple acts like prayer, meditation, breath work, or even hugging a tree can facilitate one's connection to spirit, she noted.*



Google AI Overview

Witches are figures from folklore and history, traditionally seen as people with magical powers, often feared and associated with the devil, leading to historical witch hunts like the Salem trials, but today, modern witchcraft is a spiritual path for people of any gender, practicing magic outside traditional religion, while "The Witches" also refers to the classic Roald Dahl children's book and its film adaptations, including the 2020 version starring Anne Hathaway and Octavia Spencer.

Historical and Mythological Witches

Beliefs: Often depicted as women using magic (maleficium) for harm, making pacts with demons, and being the opposite of good, though some were healers or wise women.

Witch Hunts: Spanned centuries in Europe and America (15th-18th), resulting in thousands of executions, famously the Salem Witch Trials (1692), where around 20 people were executed, mostly women.

Biblical References: The Bible mentions witches, like the Witch of Endor, and contains verses condemning their practice (Exodus 22:18).

Modern Witches

Today, witches (male, female, non-binary) practice magic, sometimes within religions like Wicca or Neopaganism, but often independently, focusing on natural healing and personal transformation.

The Witches (Roald Dahl Story)

A classic children's book about a boy and his grandmother encountering child-hating witches, led by the Grand High Witch, who plots to turn all children into mice.

Adaptations:

1990 Film: Directed by Nicolas Roeg, starring Anjelica Huston as the Grand High Witch.

2020 Film: Directed by Robert Zemeckis, starring Anne Hathaway (Grand High Witch) and Octavia Spencer, released October 22, 2020, rated PG.

Key Elements of Witchcraft (Folklore)

- ❖ Animal companions (black cats, bats, toads)
- ❖ Brooms and pointy hats
- ❖ Ducking trials in ponds or rivers

Witches Animal Companions - Black Cat

Witches and black cats are linked through centuries of folklore, stemming from medieval European beliefs that black cats were demonic "familiars" helping witches, or even witches in disguise, leading to superstitions about bad luck when they crossed your path. While some cultures view black cats as lucky, the negative association, fueled by witch trials, made them symbols of evil and mystery, though today they're often celebrated playfully in pop culture.



Witches Animal Companions - Bats

Witches and bats are deeply intertwined in folklore, primarily due to the nocturnal nature of bats and historical associations with darkness, witchcraft, and the supernatural. Historically, bats were considered familiars, messengers for witches, or even witches in disguise. These associations are solidified in modern Halloween imagery, where they represent spooky, magical, or gothic themes.



Witches Animal Companions – Toads

Toads are historically linked to witchcraft as supernatural companions providing protection, or venom for malefic potions. Considered repulsive, devil-associated, and toxic, toads were used in 16th-17th century European folklore for potions and charms, including the "toadstone" believed to negate curses.



Witches Flying on a Broom

Where did the myth that witches fly on brooms come from?

The origins of this association can be traced back to medieval Europe. During this time, people believed in witches who could perform magic and could fly. The broomstick, or "besom," was a common household item, and its use in these tales was partly due to its accessibility and symbolic connection to domestic life.



Ducking trials in ponds or rivers

Witchcraft ducking trials, known as "swimming a witch" or the "ordeal of cold water," were medieval to 18th-century practices used to test for guilt. Suspects were bound (often right thumb to left toe) and lowered into ponds or rivers; floating indicated guilt (rejected by baptismal water), while sinking signaled innocence, though many drowned in the process.



Other Words or Names for Witches

Other words for witches include sorceress, enchantress, mage, occultist, Wiccan, and necromancer, depending on the context and type of magic; broader terms are magician, conjurer, charmer, or spellbinder, while traditional negative terms include hag, crone, or beldam, and male equivalents are warlock, wizard, or sorcerer.

General and Magical Terms

Sorcerer/Sorceress: One who practices magic.

Enchanter/Enchantress: One who uses spells or charms.

Mage/Magician: A practitioner of magic.

Occultist: Someone versed in hidden or secret arts.

Wiccan: A follower of the modern pagan religion of Wicca.

Conjurer/Conjurer: Someone who calls spirits or magic forth.

Specific Types of Magic

Necromancer: One who communicates with the dead.

Elementalist: One who controls elements (fire, water, etc.).

Illusionist: One who creates illusions.

Thaumaturge: A miracle worker or magician.

Archaic and Negative Terms

Hag/Crone/Beldam: An old, often ugly or malevolent woman.

Hex/Jinx: Someone who casts curses or bad luck.

Male Equivalents

Warlock: A male witch or sorcerer.

Wizard: A male magic user, often wise.

Paganism, Wicca and Witchcraft



 <p>ATHAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct energies - Command & summon 	 <p>BELL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indicate parts of a ritual - Summon & evoke 	 <p>DOLINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harvest flowers - Cut threads - Carve wax
 <p>BROOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Magical cleansing - Purify and remove negative energies 	 <p>BOOK OF SHADOWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recipes - Guides - Observations 	 <p>CAULDRON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold ingredients and offerings - Burn items
 <p>CHALICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cup for drinking and blessing - Hold libations 	 <p>COMPASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows which way is North, South, East and West 	 <p>MAGIC WAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cast circle of protection - Summon & invite

TOOLS OF THE WITCH

9 ESSENTIALS FOR YOUR FIRST PAGAN ALTAR

Witchcraft is the use of magic or supernatural power, which can be practiced for different purposes like healing, divination, or causing harm. While traditionally associated with malevolent acts, the term has evolved and can now also refer to modern pagan religions like Wicca. A person practicing witchcraft is called a witch.



Traditional and historical perspectives

The use of magic: Historically, witchcraft was broadly defined as the use of magic or sorcery.

Harming others: A common and widespread meaning is the use of magic to inflict harm, misfortune, or illness on others, often to explain evil or misfortune. This is sometimes referred to as the "maleficium" or evil magic.

Religious context: In a historical religious context, the medieval Church viewed witchcraft as a heresy or doctrinal error and linked it to powers of evil. This led to witch hunts and trials, particularly in the 16th century, where accused witches were persecuted.

Explaining misfortune: Many cultures used the belief in witchcraft as a way to explain sudden or unexplained misfortunes, such as illness, death, or bad harvests.

Modern perspectives

A range of practices: Today, the term covers a wide range of ritual practices. It can be used to describe actions for healing, guidance, or divination, not just for harm.

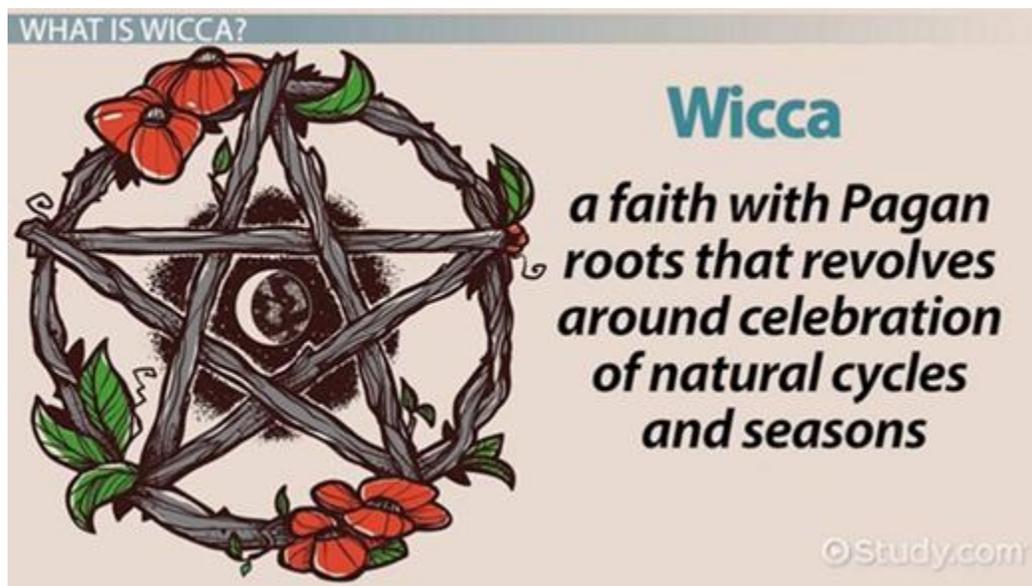
A religion: For many people, witchcraft is practiced as a religion, such as the modern pagan religion called Wicca. Wicca is a modern pagan religion that developed in England and is centered on the Earth and the cycles of the moon and sun.

A neutral term: In a broader sense, the term is used to describe any practice intended to manipulate supernatural power, regardless of whether the intent is to harm or to heal.

Feminist or cultural meanings: The term "witch" can also describe a woman who is seen as independent, rebellious, or antisocial, a usage that can be either misogynistic or feminist.

The Wicca Religion

Wicca is a modern, nature-based pagan religion emphasizing reverence for the Earth, natural cycles, and often worshipping a Goddess and a Horned God, with roots in 20th-century England popularized by Gerald Gardner. It's a decentralized faith with diverse traditions (like Gardnerian, Eclectic) focusing on seasonal festivals (Wheel of the Year), magic, and an ethical principle of "Harm None," seeing divinity in nature and all life, distinct from Satanism despite common misconceptions.



Core Beliefs & Practices:

Deities: Often polytheistic, honoring a Goddess (Mother, Moon) and a God (Horned, Sun), representing balance.

Nature Worship: Deep respect for the Earth, seasons, and natural cycles, celebrating solstices, equinoxes (sabbats) and lunar phases (esbats).

Magic and Ritual: Practices involve spells, healing, and ceremonial work, often using natural tools, with a guiding text known as the Book of Shadows.

Ethics: The Wiccan Rede, "An it harm none, do what ye will," is a central ethical guideline, emphasizing positive change and responsibility.

Reincarnation: Many Wiccans believe in reincarnation and past lives.

Structure & Diversity:

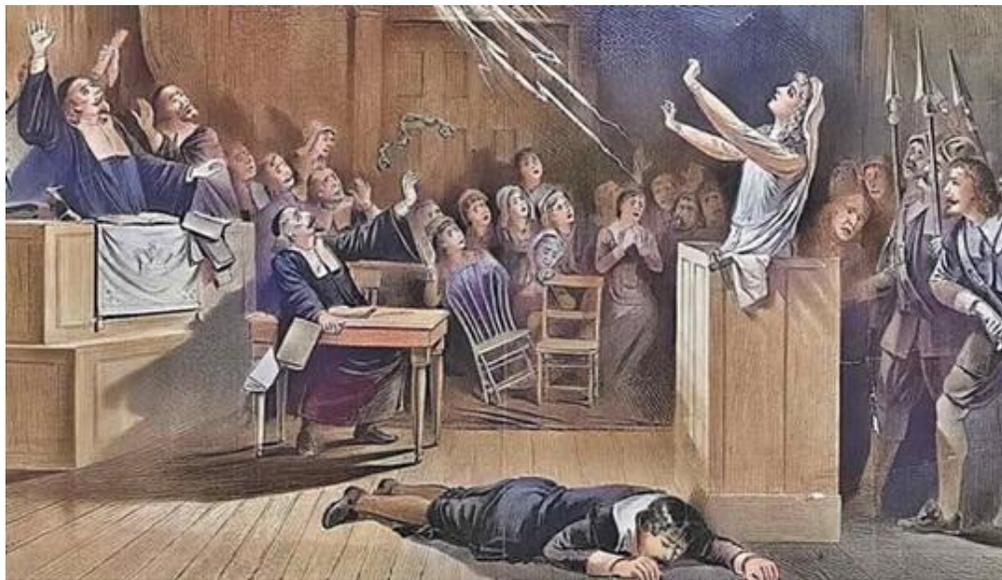
Decentralized: No single governing body, allowing for individual practice or small groups (Covens).

Traditions: Includes initiatory paths (Gardnerian, Alexandrian) and solitary/eclectic paths, leading to varied practices.

Wicca vs. Witchcraft: Wicca is a religion; witchcraft is a practice, though Wiccans often practice witchcraft.

The Most Famous Witch Event in U.S. History

The most famous witch event in U.S. history is the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, a series of hearings and prosecutions in colonial Massachusetts that led to the execution of 19 accused individuals, with mass hysteria fueled by fear, religious tension, and social conflict resulting in accusations against many others, solidifying its place as the deadliest witch hunt in North American history and a significant cultural touchstone.



Salem Witch Trials

Key Details:

When: Began in February 1692 and lasted until May 1693.

Where: Primarily Salem Village and surrounding areas in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

What Happened: A group of young girls claimed to be possessed by the devil, accusing local women (and later men) of witchcraft, leading to widespread panic.

Outcome: Over 200 people were accused; 19 were hanged, one man (Giles Corey) was pressed to death, and several others died in prison.



Significance: It remains the most infamous and significant witch hunt in American history, studied for its lessons on mass hysteria, religious extremism, and persecution.

Why It's Famous:

Scale: It was the largest and deadliest witch hunt in North America.

Cultural Impact: The trials have become a defining example of injustice, fueling historical interest, literature, and tourism in Salem.

Causes: A mix of religious fervor, social tensions, political instability, and even fears from frontier conflicts contributed to the hysteria.

Witch Trials in Europe

Between 1500 and 1660, Europe saw the execution of up to 80,000 suspected witches, with women making up roughly 80% of those accused. These trials were often driven by religious fervor, with accusations of Devil worship and heresy leading to punishments like burning at the stake.

Is being a Witch or Witchcraft Legal

Yes, witchcraft itself is generally legal in most places, protected as religious practice (like Wicca) in the U.S. and elsewhere, but laws prohibit harmful actions associated with it, such as fraud, causing fear, harassment, or physical harm, with some countries still having specific anti-witchcraft laws targeting accusations or the practice itself. The key is the distinction between belief/ritual and harmful actions or fraud, like pretending to have powers for financial gain or threatening others, which can lead to legal trouble.

Legal protections for religious practices, including witchcraft (Wicca/Paganism), were established as courts recognized it as a legitimate faith, particularly after key court cases in the 1980s, like *Dettmer v. Landon*, affirmed these rights under Constitutional protections, ending centuries of prosecutions that had already waned by the 18th century.

In the United States

Protected Belief: Witchcraft, often tied to religions like Wicca, is protected under religious freedom laws, meaning the belief and practice are generally legal.

Actionable Offenses: It becomes illegal when it involves actions like fraud (pretending to use magic for money), harassment, stalking, or causing fear, which fall under existing criminal laws.

Globally

Varying Laws: Some countries (like Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria) still have laws against witchcraft or accusing someone of being a witch, often targeting harmful practices or beliefs.

Focus on Harm: Many nations, even where specific witchcraft laws exist, focus prosecution on the resulting harm (e.g., violence, exploitation) rather than the spiritual practice itself.

Key Takeaway

You won't likely be arrested for being a witch, but you can face charges if your "witchcraft" involves breaking other laws, like fraud, assault, or violating stalking/harassment statutes.

How many Witches are there currently in the United States?

The Number of Witches Rises Dramatically Across U.S. as Millennials Reject Christianity (Headline in Newsweek)

Witchcraft and pagan religious practices increased in the U.S. over the past few decades, with Millennials turning to alternatives ranging from astrology and tarot cards and away from Christianity and traditionally dominant Abrahamic religions.

The number of witches and Americans practicing Wicca religious rituals increased dramatically since the 1990s, with several recent studies indicating there may be at least 2 million witches across the country.

What US States have the most Witches?



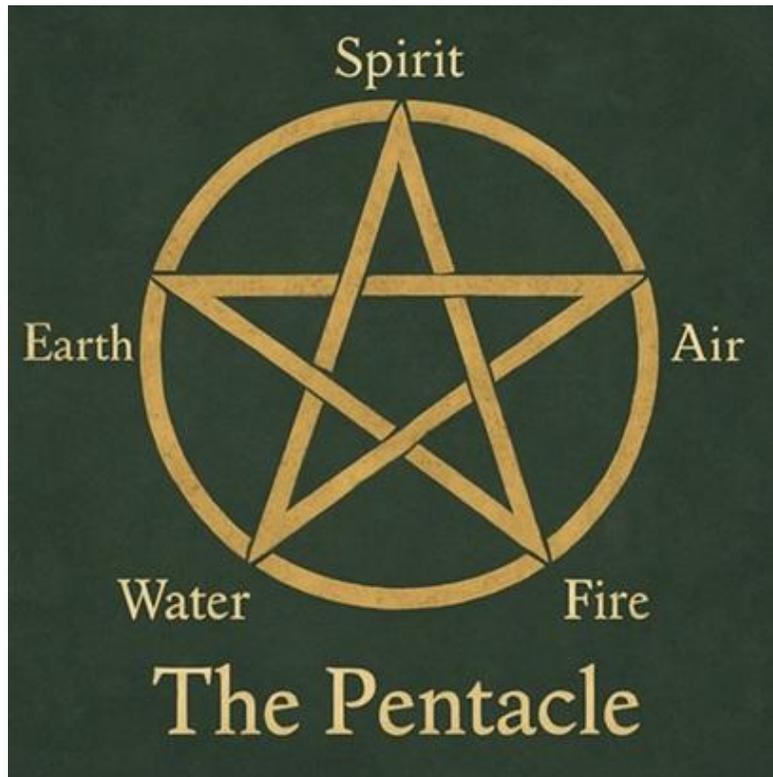
8 Countries Where the Most Witchcraft is Practiced

- South Africa
- Chile
- Philippines
- United Kingdom
- Haiti
- Mexico
- Romania
- Saudi Arabia

Witchcraft Symbols and Traditions

Witchcraft symbols and traditions provide a glimpse into ancient wisdom and modern spiritual practices. Here are three key symbols that hold special significance in witchcraft.

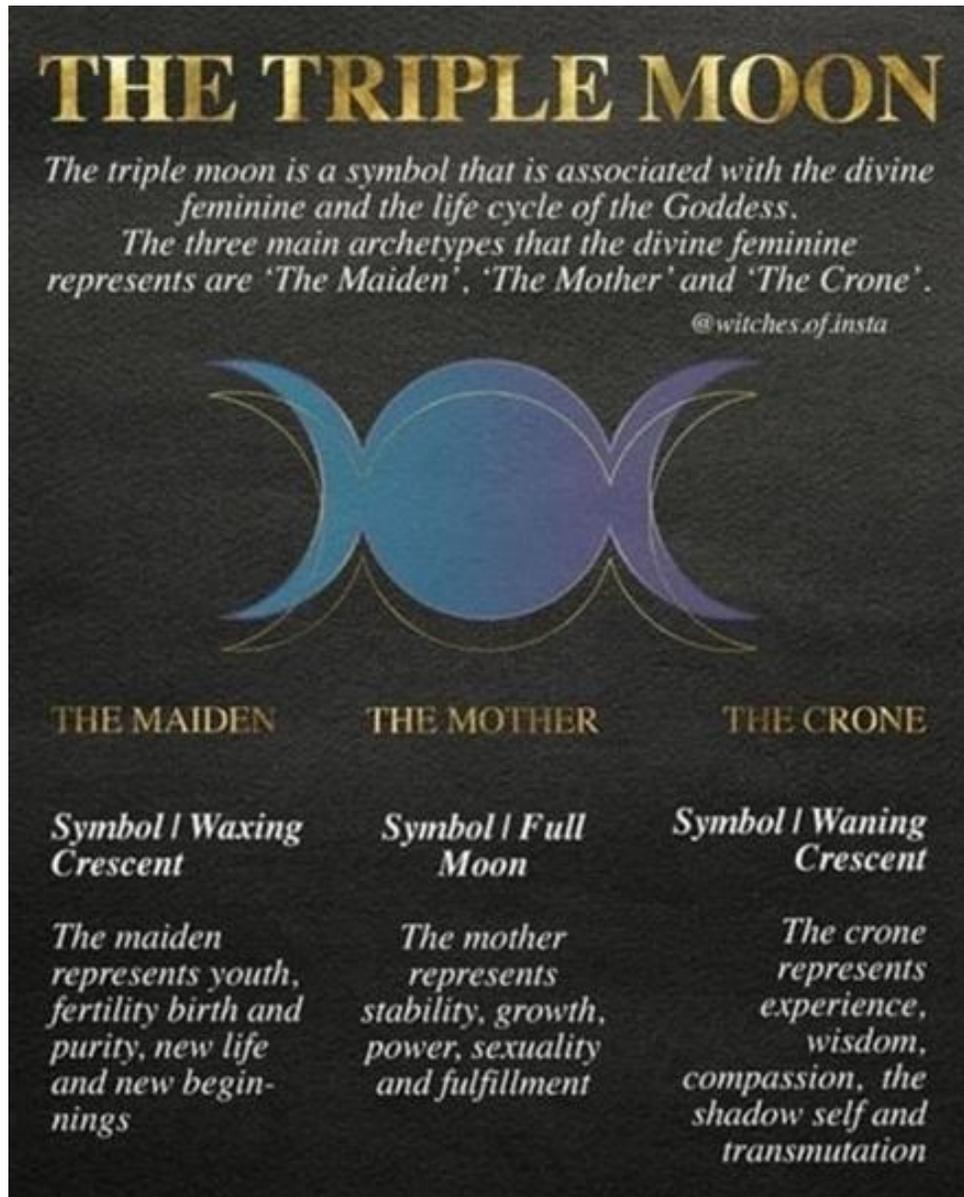
The Pentacle: A Symbol of Harmony



The pentacle is one of the most recognized symbols in witchcraft, though its integration into modern practices is relatively recent. It wasn't until the 1940s, when Gerald Gardner incorporated it into neo-pagan rituals, that the pentagram became a central figure in witchcraft. This five-pointed star, surrounded by a circle, represents the four classical elements - earth, air, fire, and water - along with spirit. The circle around it is a protective element that connects all of the elements together.

Though often misunderstood and wrongly associated with satanic practices, the pentacle symbolizes balance, protection, and unity in Wiccan traditions. Today, it's a common feature in candle magic, altar setups, and meditation practices.

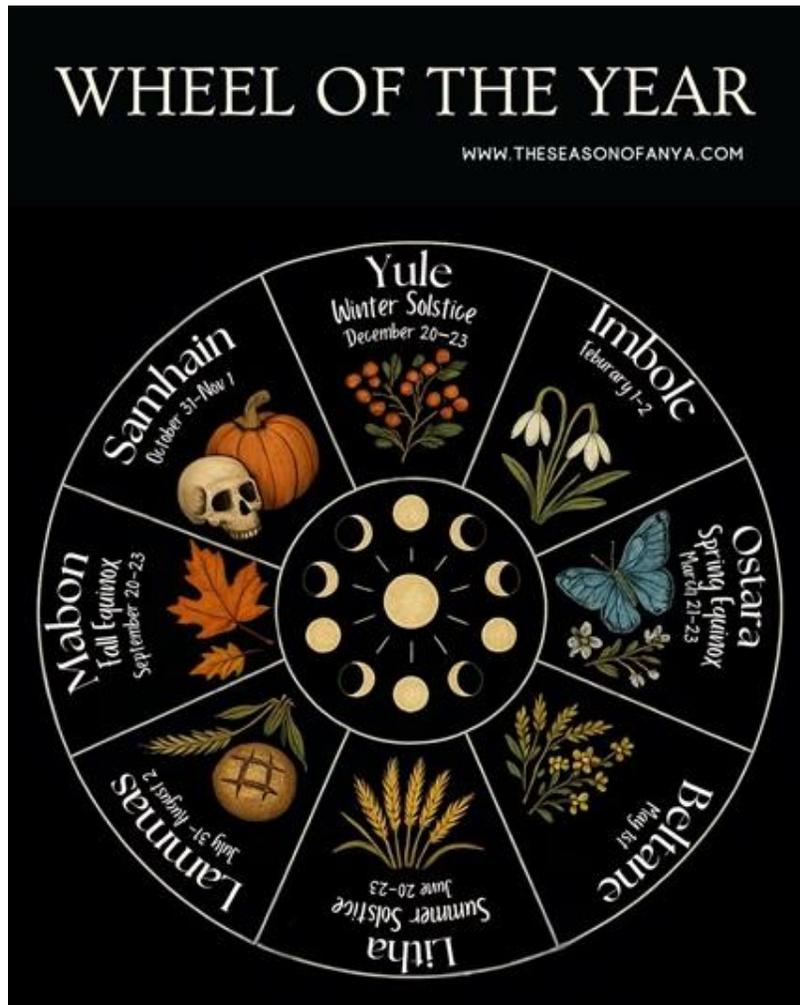
The Triple Moon: A Celebration of Feminine Energy



The Triple Moon symbol embodies divine feminine energy, representing the moon's waxing, full, and waning phases. These phases align with the Maiden, Mother, and Crone archetypes of the Goddess, symbolizing life's cycles and feminine power.

This symbol extends beyond rituals and has become a popular emblem of strength. The Triple Moon is often used as a symbol of strength and a reminder that the Goddess is always there. That's why you often will find this symbol made into jewelry and tattoos.

The Wheel of the Year: Honoring Nature's Cycles



The Wheel of the Year reflects the ongoing cycle of seasons and nature's rhythm, marked by eight Sabbats celebrated throughout the year. This tradition blends ancient seasonal observances with modern spiritual practices, offering a way to honor natural cycles.

Rooted in historical customs, the Wheel has evolved to suit contemporary lifestyles while maintaining its connection to nature. Each Sabbat highlights specific energies, from the renewal of the spring equinox to the gratitude of autumn harvests. Practitioners often personalize these celebrations, keeping the tradition alive and meaningful.

Superstitions

Witchcraft symbols and traditions are steeped in folklore, and these superstitions offer a fascinating glimpse into the beliefs that have shaped witch-related myths. Superstitions like these can also make for intriguing questions in any witch-themed trivia game.

Black Cats: From Revered to Feared



The link between black cats and witches is one of history's most persistent superstitions, shaped by centuries of religious influence and medieval fear. What started as reverence for these animals in some cultures eventually turned into suspicion and fear.

During the medieval era, people believed the devil and witches could take the form of black cats. Some even thought that black cats serving as witches' familiars for seven years would eventually transform into witches themselves. Therefore, a black cat crossing your path might very well be on a mission from a witch...It might be the devil in disguise. This explains why a black cat crossing your path is considered a bad omen.

These superstitions have had a lasting impact, even in modern times. For example, black cats face significant challenges in animal shelters, with the highest euthanasia rate at 74.6% and the lowest adoption rate at only 10%. In colonial America, Puritan settlers further solidified the connection between black cats and witchcraft.

Opening Umbrellas Inside



Opening umbrellas indoors isn't the smartest option, especially if you live in small quarters with valuable trinkets, knick-knacks and other fragile items. You could knock over and break things or cause physical harm to yourself or someone else in close proximity.

In ancient Egypt, umbrellas were needed to protect noble and high-class people from the sun. Opening umbrellas indoors or in the shade was considered offensive to the Sun God.

Walking Under Ladders



This superstition often associates with Christianity because of the Trinity -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and because an open ladder leaning against a wall looks like a triangle. When someone walks under the ladder, it looks like they’re “breaking” the triangle.

Not to mention, walking under ladders may cause harm to you and the person standing on the ladder because it can tip and fall or items may land on your head.

Breaking Mirrors



In Greek culture, people believed mirrors could hold your soul after looking into them. If you break a mirror, you’re breaking part of your soul, and you have seven years of bad luck. Plus, breaking mirrors can cause glass shards to cut or penetrate the skin or body. Not a fun time.

This belief is similar to Native Americans thinking cameras could capture your soul.

Tossing Salt Over Left Shoulder

Taking a pinch of spilled salt and tossing it over the left shoulder is intended to keep the devil at bay because he sits on the left while an angel sits on the right. Some people associate this superstition with Leonardo da Vinci’s The Last Supper painting. If you look closely, you see Judas’s spilled salt by his arm on the table. Judas is the disciple who betrayed Jesus Christ.



Knocking On Wood

This practice has a few associations. One is the Celt-pagan culture who believed spirits and gods lived in trees. Knocking on tree trunks intends to rouse the deities to give protection or a stroke of good luck if done in gratitude.

The other connection is Christians regarding this practice as knocking on the wood of the cross, a symbol of Jesus Christ's crucifixion.



Finding A Four-Leaf Clover

This rare plant is harder to find than three-leafed clovers, but its significance has Christian and Celtic roots.



People believe Eve plucked a four-leaf clover as she and Adam fled the Garden of Eden after their fall from grace.

Celt culture says four-leaf clovers offer magical powers that shield you from evil and bad luck. They also believed you can use these plants to see fairies who play deadly pranks or kidnap children.

Conclusion

I believe that witchcraft can be real and most modern-day witches don't make deals with the devil or summon demons.

What do you think?

Bigdrifter44@gmail.com

Bigdrifter.com