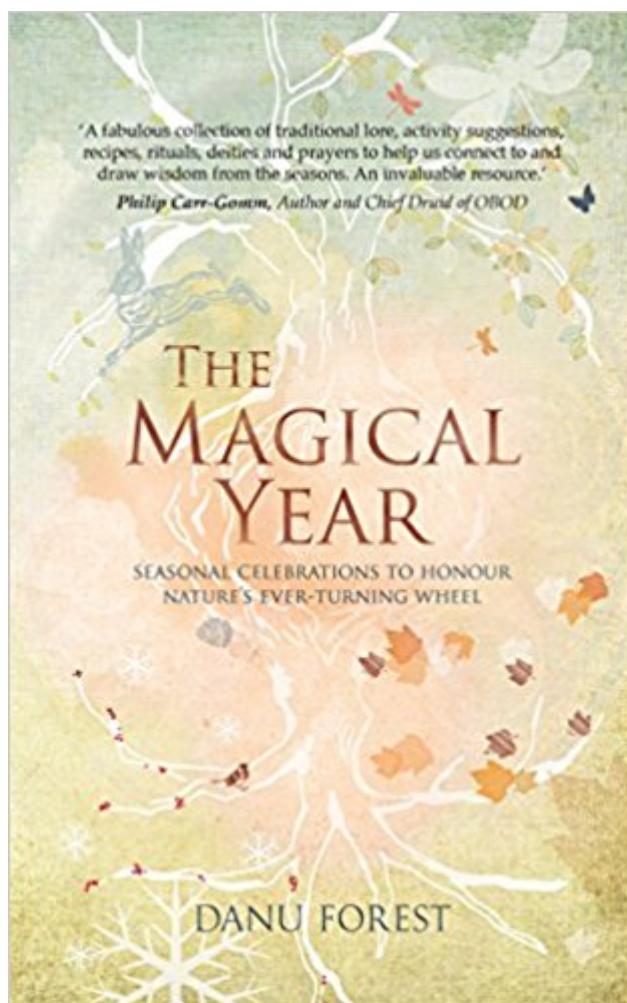


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The Magical Year: Seasonal Celebrations To Honor Nature's Ever-Turning Wheel



Synopsis

The Celtic seasonal wheel is based on eight festivals – Winter Solstice, Imbolc, Spring Equinox, Beltane, Summer Solstice, Lughnasadh, Autumn Equinox and Samhain. Together, these lead us through the cycle of the year, aligning our awareness with the seasonal pattern of the earth beneath our feet. In this book on the solstices, equinoxes and other festivals within the sacred cycle, Danu Forest reveals the secrets of each festival in turn and skilfully revives ancient traditions, encouraging us to reconnect with nature, and ourselves, with a host of practical ideas and rituals. Decorate your home with beautiful seasonal crafts and altars to manifest sacred space. Make gifts to give to friends, cast spells for creativity, fertility and blessing, and use the abundance of nature in recipes that can be enjoyed as part of your seasonal celebrations or for self-healing and empowerment. Meditate on the changing heavens throughout the year with Celtic star lore. Deepen your experience of the turning seasons, from the rest and renewal of winter through the revels of spring and summer to the soul or spirit nights of autumn with magical guided visualizations. This cycle of conscious celebration helps us, year on year, to align with nature's rhythms with greater wonder and insight. Based on sound extensive research, as well as many years of practical experience through both personal practice and teaching, the book will act as a guide for weaving a new, more soulful way of living into readers' everyday existence.

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Customer Reviews

'The Magical Year is a fabulous collection of traditional lore, activity suggestions, recipes, rituals,

deities and prayers to help us connect to and draw wisdom from the seasons. An invaluable resource for anyone new to the festivals of the Wheel of the Year but also an enjoyable read for those who have long celebrated these magical shifts in nature.' - Philip Carr-Gomm, Author and Chief Druid of OBOD 'An insightful guide, rich with Danu Forest's understanding of the ancient ways, traditions, folklore and magical lore behind the seasonal celebrations.' - Glennie Kindred, Author and Artist

Danu Forest has been a practising druid witch and Celtic shaman for over twenty years, has been teaching Celtic shamanism and witchcraft for over a decade, and runs a shamanic consultation and healing practice. She is the author of Nature Spirits: wyrd lore and wild fey magic (Wooden Books), The Druid Shaman (Moon Books) and Celtic Tree Magic (Llewellyn), creates and teaches email correspondence courses, writes a "Danu's Cauldron" blog for witchesandpagans.com, and has been published in magazines such as Kindred Spirit, Soul and Spirit, and Pagan Dawn. She is also an Ard BanDruí in the Irish Druid Clan of Dana, an ordained priestess, a druid grade member of OBOD (Order of Bards, Ovates (healers/seers) and Druids) and a member of The Society of Shamanic Practitioners. For more information, see www.danuforest.co.uk

Nicely written and easily understood by a beginner. Gives information on each holiday as well as rituals, items needed, recipes, crafts and other suggestions.

This book is a Celtic-centered experience of the Wheel of the Year. Now, if you don't know, the Wheel of the Year is one of the pagan (or neopagan) methods of marking the seasons of the year with a collection of eight celebrations. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Forest gave a well researched history of each spoke of the wheel, and introduces the reader to several different deities associated with that time of year. Each chapter is sort of broken down into themes, including several meditations, witchy-pagan crafts, some evocations and more. The spellwork and evocations are simple, yet powerfully written, with corresponding texts as to why this is suitable for this time of year. Now this is Celtic-centered, so all of the deities, celebrations, and crafts have a very Celtic slant. I appreciated how the author introduced me to new deities and historical practices. I like the modern interpretation Forest gave as well, making these celebrations doable for a modern-day pagan. If you are interested in the Wheel of the Year, Celtic celebrations and cultures, and paganism, I recommend this book. **I was given access to an advanced e-copy of this book for an

honest review.

I've not had the book for a full year. I've been using it since autumn equinox and before every holiday I pull it out and it's made all the difference in the world. One point I want to stress is that it's full of information. If you like to make things for the holidays, there are lots of options, if you want to contemplate with a visualization, you will not be disappointed. Crafts, kitchen witchery, themes, all in the book. If you have a curious mind, fear not, she will feed it. I've read different books on the natural holidays but this one has the information that actually connects you to the holidays in a way you can make them yours. I can't say enough, if you want to really connect to the seasons this book is a joy, easy to put to use and it helps me connect on many levels. It will feed the curious mind.

As we have become accustomed from Danu Forest's work, another excellent book, this time to regain the much needed awareness of the natural cycles of the year. Two millennia of misguided disconnect from the very basis we live on and from, our planet earth, brought upon us by revealed religions, can only be overcome by bridging our time with those of our ancient European forebears. Danu has once again constructed this important bridge to the Druids of old who, as Diodorus Siculus as one of many Druid contemporaries writing about them conveyed, knew the language of the Gods. Looking back at 2,000 years of mayhem amongst members of revealed religions (e.g. Catholics vs Protestants in the 100 year war), and the ongoing destruction of our planet, Danu's suggestions may just be our only beacon of light enabling us to leave the dark ages behind once and for all. Thank you.

A wonderful and inspiring book for our seasonal rituals!

What a wonderful book by a wonderful lady.

The author claims to be an Arch Druidess who practices 'Druidry' but how? We know almost nothing of Druids. Just a few sentences from ancient writers like Tacitus. Recent archaeology has taught us much more about the Druids. The bones from 150 human beings were discovered in a cave Alveston, England. These were people murdered by Druids, the skulls were crushed by savage blows. Worse, archaeologists discovered thigh bones had been cracked open and the marrow sucked out, proof of cannibalism. Nor were these the only human bones in England from the time of the Druids that archaeologists found to show signs of cannibalism. Human bones from Warly Hill,

Coveney, show clear butchery marks. Apparently the slaughter went on across Europe. Every so often another bog body is discovered, and most were clearly murdered. Tollund Man from Denmark, was hanged. Old Croghan Man in Ireland was stabbed in the chest, and then disemboweled and decapitated. Old Croghan Man disproves the theory that these people were 'happy' to be sacrificed. There are clear signs on Old Croghan Man's arms that he attempted to fend off the attack. What about the French Celts? Their warriors, whenever they killed a man in battle, would hack off his head and hang the head on the horses they rode. Later, the head would be defleshed to hang proudly from the house doorway. The head of someone important might be defleshed, gilded, and then serve as a drinking cup. A good book on the subject: *Dying for the Gods: Human Sacrifice in Iron Age and Roman Europe*. The Romans were so horrified by all the human sacrifice by Druids they exterminated the Druids. And we are talking ancient Romans here, whose idea of a jolly time was to watch animals being hacked, stabbed, or clawed to death. Not to mention the eager cheers from the Roman populace as they saw condemned prisoners, Christians, and gladiators pouring out their life blood in the arena. Imagine this vile group being morally revolted by anyone. The ancient world was brutal and stony-hearted. We don't need a revival of any part of it. No one could make up a religion based on the scanty bits of information we have on the Druids, so Forest is forced to add bits, She swipes chakras and this idea from Hinduism: "rediscover your goddess or god within". And from an old time 70s encounter group: "Seek out ways to become prouder of yourself...so that you can act from a position of self-worth" (p 93). Personally, I worry that we are being smothered with the self-love, self-worth, not to mention selfies today. Considering the ideas Forest peddles, ponder these research articles I came across: 1. Rosemary Aird of the University of Queensland studied 3,700 21-year-olds in Brisbane and concluded that New Age spirituality was linked "with higher rates of depression, disturbed...ways of thinking, and anti-social behavior". Her conclusion: New Age beliefs undermine mental health. 2. *Psychol Rep.* 2002 Apr;90(2):405-11. Narcissism and belief in the paranormal - "scores for narcissism correlated with belief in ESP and New Age beliefs but not for those who are religious and believe in life after death. 3. Professor Michael King, from University College London, and his fellow researchers wrote in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*: "Those who called themselves spiritual or New Age but not religious were 77 per cent more likely than the others to be dependent on drugs, 72 per cent more likely to suffer from a phobia, and 50 per cent more likely to have an anxiety disorder. They were also 40 per cent more likely to be receiving treatment with psychotropic drugs, and at a 37 per cent higher risk of neurotic disorder." The study was based on a survey of 7,403 randomly selected men and women in England.

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