

Yuletide – what? when? how?

Nowadays Yuletide is a loosely defined time of year centred round The Winter Solstice / Christmas commencing any time after the full moon before the solstice and ending on Twelfth Night or beyond. Before the 19th century people celebrated the 12 days of Christmas but in more recent times the secular tradition has become 'all for one or two days'. Neo Pagans however prefer to celebrate 'the season' with many activities focusing on the Solstice and celebrating the 'return of the light.



Here are some activities that might be incorporated in celebrating yuletide. How many do you do already?

- Plan a range of activities for the whole season recognising that Christmas Eve and Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day have their origins in Winter Solstice celebrations of a variety of Pagan cultures through the ages.
- Decorate your home with sacred plants connected with Winter Solstice: evergreen wreaths & boughs, mistletoe, holly, and ivy. Learn about the Pagan symbolism of each.
- Set up a Yule tree in your home and decorate it with lights, sun symbols, and other images. Reflect on blessings of joy, renewal, and well-wishes as you decorate the tree.
- Use lights to represent the Sun. Decorate with electric lights and candles. On the night of the Solstice, turn off all lights, experience the longest night, reflect on renewal and peace, and turn the lights back on to symbolize the birth of the New Solar Year.
- Recognize Santa as a multi-cultural, multi-religious character - learn about the Pagan roots of Santa and other Winter Solstice sacred gift bringers, including the Goddess.
- Learn about celebratory foods, symbols, customs, and incorporate something you have learned into your celebration of Yuletide.
- Listen to Pagan Yuletide music. Create a Yuletide chant, poem, or song.
- Burn a Yule Log in a hearth, in a bonfire, or by burning candles on, in, or near a log of Oak on an altar. Learn about Yule Log traditions and create your own.
- Meditate on the rising and/or setting of the Solstice Sun. Note its position on the horizon at this time of year and observe its change in position on the horizon as the days start lengthening again.
- Join with others in celebrating Pagan Yuletide. Attend a ritual, be part of a festival, join an on-line discussion, host a party.
- Contribute to a charity of your choice. Spread the joy of Yuletide.
- Learn about sacred sites aligned with the Winter Solstice. Envision your own celebrations of Winter Solstice being part of a vast network of Solstice celebrations happening around the planet.
- Focus on world peace and planetary well-being in your rituals, meditations, prayers, and other workings.

Blessed be.

Tony