

CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

Slow & Seasonal

july



JULY 2019

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i> New Moon	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>	<i>5th</i>	<i>6th</i>	<i>7th</i>
<i>8th</i>	<i>9th</i>	<i>10th</i>	<i>11th</i>	<i>12th</i>	<i>13th</i>	<i>14th</i>
<i>15th</i> St Swithin's Day	<i>16th</i> Full Buck Moon	<i>17th</i> Dharma Day	<i>18th</i>	<i>19th</i>	<i>20th</i>	<i>21st</i>
<i>22nd</i>	<i>23rd</i>	<i>24th</i>	<i>25th</i>	<i>26th</i>	<i>27th</i>	<i>28th</i>
<i>29th</i>	<i>30th</i>	<i>31st</i>				

JULY'S COULD-DO LIST

Turn off your electronic devices for the day - a summer's day is the perfect opportunity to go off grid!

Make a daisy chain - hark back to your youth by making a chain of delicate flowers - can you remember how?

Head out in search of wildflowers - take photos of what you find on your walk to print and hang around your house, adding a splash of colour that will never fade and a happy memory each time you pass them.

Make your lunch break a time for adventure! Try to fit a micro-adventure in the midst of your working day.

Lie in the grass with your eyes closed. Feel the summer sun on your skin and listen to the sounds that surround you - be completely in that moment.

MENU PLANNING / OTHER NOTES

- 1st.....
- 2nd.....
- 3rd.....
- 4th.....
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- 6th.....
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- 28th.....
- 29th.....
- 30th.....
- 31st.....

Nature Spots in July

Use these pages to record your nature spots for the month ahead. Add notes, images, sketches and/or stick in foraged finds!

GRASSES & WILDFLOWERS

Grasses so tall they tickle your shoulders, hiding splashes of colour that are revealed to be a myriad of wildflowers - don't miss your chance to explore these magical micro environments.

A wildflower from July...

Buddleia petals...

BUDDLEIA

The 'butterfly bush' comes into full bloom in July - it also attracts plenty of bees to its sweet-smelling flowers.

LAST OF THE SWIFTS

In July the swifts will start to leave us once again, so keep your eyes to the sky for one last look at these harbingers of summer.

Are they still here?

GRASSHOPPERS & CRICKETS

Their noise is abundant this month, but these creatures can be tricky to spot! Why not start a little competition with your family for who can spot one first?

Who managed to see a grasshopper first?

How many moths did you see?

MOTHS

Pick a dry, warm evening and head outside at dusk. Drape a sheet over the washing line and shine a light behind it to watch them flock towards it.

RUNNER BEANS

Extremely plentiful this month - make sure you pick them early before they go stringy! More than you can eat? Why not try pickling them?

How we've eaten runner beans...

Other nature spots this month...



JULY MICROADVENTURE

Adventure Alone

According to Alastair Humphreys, a microadventure is an “outdoor adventure that is small and achievable for normal people with real lives.” It’s the sort of activity you could fit into your 5-9 (i.e. once your working day is over!). Why not add this month’s microadventure to your calendar now?

This month I’d like to suggest a microadventure that may be second nature to some, but a little scary to others, like myself at one time.

Adventure in general can seem scary to begin with, and perhaps there is comfort to be found in partnering with somebody else as you seek it – safety found in numbers. But does this safety-net stymie the adventure and adrenaline? Don’t worry, I’m not suggesting we all take up skydiving alone anytime soon, but perhaps venturing out alone is a new way to experience adventure for some of us. My suggestion for July is a simple one: a breakfast picnic, alone. The morning can be such a freeing time to clear our minds and start the day well. I intend to head to a little beach nearby that is always empty for mine.

I realise this may not be possible for those of you in a city, or surrounded by family. But why not try to fit in one activity you normally do with others, and try it with only yourself for company?

Lost Crafts

Pressing Flowers

Do you recall picking flowers as a child and excitedly pressing them between two heavy books? I loved the big reveal after a month had gone by, desperately hoping they had stayed intact during that time.

This simple process is still such a great way to preserve your blooms. Popular for wedding bouquets, it can also help you remember the riot of colour and shapes that adorned your garden during the summer months.

1. Snip your flowers when they are dry, not too early in the morning or the dew will not have dried.
2. Lay them face-down on some printing paper or anything that isn't textured. If you use a textured paper towel the pattern will imprint on your petals.
3. Lay another sheet on top and then place within a large book.
4. Place another on top, or something else heavy if you have something to hand.
5. Leave in this position for at least a month before delicately removing the weights to reveal the pressed flowers within.
6. Use tweezers to remove if needed – they will be very delicate!

Use to make cards or frame to create unique works of art, or simply stick them within your journal to remind yourself what bloomed this year.



July 2019 Moon Phases

NEW MOON: 2ND JULY

Set your intentions for the month ahead.

FIRST QUARTER: 9TH JULY

Check in with your intentions and take action.

FULL MOON: 16TH JULY

Have you achieved your intention? If yes, move ahead and continue with positivity. If no, re-set and allow for change.

THIRD QUARTER: 25TH JULY

Think back on our intentions set at the start of the month.

FULL BUCK MOON

This month's full moon is often known as the 'Buck Moon', as it is usually the time in the year when the antlers of stags are fully grown. Another name for July's full moon is 'Thunder Moon' so watch out for thunderstorms over the next few weeks.

NEW MOON PROMPTS

July's new moon is a time to remind ourselves of our own power and resilience; a time to keep going. Consider these prompts around the time of the new moon to help you set intentions for the month ahead.

1. What has left you feeling drained or exhausted over the past month?

2. What boundaries might you put in place to help with the things you have identified in the first prompt? Which things must you accept as just being part of your life's journey right now? Write them down, then move on from fixating on them.

3. Feed your creativity rather than your fears. What project or activity brings you to life at the moment? How might you take action with this rather than holding back?

4. Where in your life or work is courage required right now? Focus on the positive outcome that may happen if you are to move forwards and be brave. Try to keep this in mind when your thoughts drift to the negative.

CELTIC TREE MONTH

Holly

In the Celtic tree calendar, each month corresponds to a different tree. In opening ourselves to this arboreal wisdom, we connect further with nature's rhythms. My approach to the calendar is to use it as a reminder to embrace and celebrate all trees, and to learn more about their associated myths and folklore. It is an earth-centred approach, rather than a pagan one.

HOLLY

Immortality, Energy, Protection.

As the reign of the Oak King comes to an end in the first half of the year, the Holly King takes over after the solstice and reigns for the darker half of the year.

Although festive greenery is traditionally burned at Imbolc, it is considered lucky to keep a small sprig of holly throughout the year.

If you dream of picking holly, it supposedly means you will have a long life!

Symbolic of energy and being prepared, the wood of holly was used in ancient times to construct spear shafts.

A hot compress made from the leaves and bark of holly was often used to ease the pain if you had broken a bone or dislocated something.

Holly is said to protect against lightning (very apt for summer thunderstorms!), poison and evil spirits.



Eat Seasonably in July

July brings the start of late summer produce, and in particular the beginning of the berry season. With strawberries almost past their prime, opt for raspberries, and blueberries, or try something different and add fresh blackcurrants to your breakfast bowl, or to yogurt for an easy dessert.

Vegetables like courgettes and beetroot are ready to be picked now too, though they'll still be fairly small at this stage if you grow them yourself. Try grating courgette, fennel and carrot into strips and cook in foil with lemon juice for a delicious side dish. You could grate beetroot too - it's brilliant in chilli dishes, or try cubing it and adding to a salad.

Finally, runner beans are starting to appear - grab them now before they get stringy, and they're so much easier to prepare. Perfect in a simple pasta dish with pesto served with curly lettuce as a side.

JULY CHECKLIST

Cherries
Raspberries
Strawberries
Blueberries
Blackcurrants
Gooseberries
Apricots
Cucumber

Curly lettuce
Celery
Fennel
Rainbow chard
Courgettes
Spinach
Beetroot
Runner beans

MEAL PLANNING

Dishes I want to try this month...

Fruit or vegetable(s) I'd like to start cooking with more...

Easy midweek recipes to try (circle)...

Beetroot tarte tatin	Fried courgette strips & creamy pasty
Spiced carrot & fennel salad	English summer pudding
Spelt, spinach & cherry salad	Fennel, radish & cabbage coleslaw
Courgette fritters & salsa	Baked apricots with vanilla, butter & thyme

You can also use the calendar at the front of this mini book as a space to note down your meal plans!

Seasonal Days

ST SWITHIN'S DAY (15TH)

*“St Swithin’s day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain;
St Swithin’s day, if thou be fair,
For forty days ’twill rain no more.”*

DENHAM, 1846

A day to watch the weather carefully; the 15th of July could spell disaster for the harvest and your summer plans if this famous piece of weather lore is to be believed.

However, when we delve a little deeper into this saint’s lore, there are so many different origins and interpretations that St Swithin’s day could be argued to fall on a number of days throughout July.

St Swithin himself was an English saint, and Bishop of Winchester from around the year 854. Some time after his death, his remains were moved from the outside to the inside of Winchester Old Minster on July 15th 971.



The heavy downpour that followed was thought to indicate St Swithin's power over the weather and that he disliked being moved.

Since then, people have forecasted future weather patterns based on the signs on this particular day, and believe they can see into a future that has been divinely ordained.

However, this forecasting technique shares many similarities with versions from several centuries earlier. A number of sayings were adapted from Roman lore in the early days of Christianity to predict the weather based on days in *early* July. Despite these originating in the Mediterranean, they led farming communities throughout the world to follow the predictions and hope for a good harvest, until St Swithin became a more likely candidate for Britain.

St Swithin's is a complex day to fathom, to say the least, and perhaps not the best tool for weather prediction in this day and age! However, when the 15th comes around this month, why not stand outside, and use this day to appreciate the weather that day, whatever it may be? Feel the warmth of the sun, or the rain on your skin, and remember how it feels, because whichever it may be, who knows when it will come again? We are still not much better at predicting than St Swithin himself!

THE ROLE OF FOLKLORE

We have already touched, in regards to St Swithin's Day, on how folklore and history have long mixed together to become an integral part of Britain and the English countryside. Much of our folklore talks of nature and connects us to that which surrounds us. With climate change upon us, it is more important than ever to encourage that connection, and appreciate all that the natural world provides us. The folk tales and songs have been passed down throughout generations, and are our natural heritage.

We look to cathedrals and castles and think we see our history painted on their walls, but folklore is a far more ancient institution. It tells us tales of the world before everything was recorded, or could be explained, and the workings of nature were just as fantastic as the idea of elves and faeries.

Even the simple apple has so many meanings, magical properties and rituals that a whole book could be written on them. It may seem like nonsense to some, but if even one aspect resonates, it deepens our connection to the apple and to the earth, reinforcing the knowledge that we too came from the natural world, and must do all we can to protect it.

Slow Sundays

Each week, try to find a day to actively live more slowly. It doesn't have to be a Sunday, whatever works best for you! Use the page opposite to plan or record (or both!) how you spend this day.

What you might include in your Slow Sundays...

- Choose not to travel in a way that uses fossil fuels. Stick to walking or cycling.
- Make space for creativity, in whatever form that takes for you. Spend ten minutes sketching outdoors, or spend the morning crafting, whatever brings you joy.
- Move your body slowly. Stretch throughout the day, and make time for a short yoga or Tai Chi session.
- Cook something from scratch, using seasonal ingredients if at all possible.
- Switch off any electronics that you don't need. Light candles instead of turning on the lights.
- Don't spend anything.
- Bake bread. The process itself is an act of meditation, and you've got a wonderful food to enjoy at the end! There are no-knead recipes out there too if you're after even more simplicity.
- Spend at least one hour outside, if not the whole day! Resolve to see this one through, whatever the weather,
- For some religions, Sunday is a day of gratitude and prayer. Why not choose to give thanks to Gaia, or Mother Earth, with a short meditation.
- Go to bed early!

For July...

- Make the most of the longer nights before they begin to draw in again, and go for a late evening walk.
- Turn a weekend lunch into an at-home adventure by throwing a blanket on the grass and eating outdoors.
- Turn off all external noise - unplug the radio or your phone, and avoid listening to podcasts. Try to enjoy the sound of silence, and you might be surprised at how much else you hear.
- Embrace walking in the rain. It's the time of year when you're most likely to enjoy it as the temperature makes the wet weather more bearable - give it a go!

WEEK ONE: 1ST - 7TH JULY

WEEK TWO: 8TH - 14TH JULY

WEEK THREE: 15TH - 21ST JULY

WEEK FOUR: 22ND - 31ST JULY

Rituals and Rites

ON CREATIVITY

When you have a feeling, you may put what you feel into words.
If you see a beautiful tree, you may write a poem describing,
not the tree, but what the tree has awakened in you.
That feeling is the new, it is the creative thing;
but you cannot bring it about, it must happen to you.

Krishnamurti

ON RITUALS

Any ritual is an opportunity for transformation.
To do a ritual, you must be willing to be transformed in some way.
The inner willingness is what makes the ritual come alive and have power.
If you aren't willing to be changed by the ritual, don't do it.

Starhawk

ENGLISH PROVERB

If the first of July be rainy weather,
It will rain, more or less, for four weeks together.

IN JULY

Sir Henry Newbold

His beauty bore no token,
No sign our gladness shook;
With tender strength unbroken
The hand of Life he took:
But the summer flowers were falling,
Falling and fading away,
And mother birds were calling,
Crying and calling
For their loves that would not stay.

He knew not Autumn's chillness,
Nor Winter's wind nor Spring's.
He lived with Summer's stillness
And sun and sunlit things:
But when the dusk was falling
He went the shadowy way,
And one more heart is calling,
Crying and calling
For the love that would not stay.

CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

For those who strive to live more slowly, who are inspired by the first snowdrop and who walk outside in the rain. For lovers of stories, everyday adventures and local traditions. For those who opt for simplicity, appreciate ancient crafts, and celebrate the seasons.

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