

# CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

Stories. Nature. Folklore. Adventure.

*m a r c h*



# march

third month, c. 1200, from Anglo-French *marche*, Old French *marz*, from Latin *Martius* (*mensis*) "(month) of Mars," from *Mars* (genitive *Martis*). Replaced Old English *bræðmonað*, the first part of which is of uncertain meaning, perhaps from *bræd* "quick, nimble, ready, active, alert, prompt."

Online Etymology Dictionary, © 2010 Douglas Harper

## DEAR MARCH – COME IN?

Emily Dickinson

Dear March - Come in -  
How glad I am -  
I hoped for you before -  
Put down your Hat -  
You must have walked -  
How out of Breath you are -  
Dear March, how are you, and the Rest -  
Did you leave Nature well -  
Oh March, Come right upstairs with me -  
I have so much to tell -

I got your Letter, and the Birds -  
The Maples never knew that you were coming -  
I declare - how Red their Faces grew -  
But March, forgive me -  
And all those Hills you left for me to Hue -  
There was no Purple suitable -  
You took it all with you -

Who knocks? That April -  
Lock the Door -  
I will not be pursued -  
He stayed away a Year to call  
When I am occupied -  
But trifles look so trivial  
As soon as you have come

That blame is just as dear as Praise  
And Praise as mere as Blame -



# Nature Spots in March

## HAWTHORN BUDS

These buds burst forth in March and new fresh green leaves appear, creamy white flowers will follow as spring progresses through April and May.



## THE SIGN OF SPRING

Catch sight of Mad March Hares in open fields in the early morning.

Their mating season means their guard is down, so you're more likely to spot them this month.

## QUEEN BUMBLEBEES

The first bees should appear this month – the queens that have survived winter will be seeking nectar and pollen from spring flowers.

## CHIFFCHAFFS

Usually one of the first migrant birds to arrive, their distinctive call from the tree tops cannot be mistaken, their repetitive 'chiffchaff' song calls down.



## FROGSPAWN

Frogspawn – If you spy masses of this jelly-like spawn, be glad – it's one of the first signs of spring! Search it out in local ponds and ditches.

## WOOD ANEMONES

The snowdrops may be gone but these delicate white flowers can still be found on your woodland walks.

It's best to look on sunny days though, as they close their petals when the weather is overcast.

# March 2019 Moon Phases

NEW MOON: 6TH MARCH

Set your intentions for the month ahead.

FIRST QUARTER: 14TH MARCH

Check in with your intentions and take action.

FULL MOON: 21ST MARCH

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

THIRD QUARTER: 28TH MARCH

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

FULL WORM MOON

This month's full moon is often known as the 'Worm Moon,' as it is typically the month when earthworm casts begin to reappear as the ground thaws and softens. It is seen as an invitation to returning robins and symbolises the start of spring. It is also often known as the 'Full Sap Moon,' as the sap of sugar maples starts to flow.

## NEW MOON PROMPTS

*March's new moon is the perfect time to begin; a moment for movement and action.. Consider these prompts around the time of the new moon to help you set intentions for the month ahead.*

1. What has been lurking at the back of your mind for some time now? What passion would you like to reignite?

2. What is it that's stopped you from moving forward with this idea or dream so far? Forgive yourself if you have experienced any regret, and set an intention to begin again.

3. Chinese Astrology has moved into the year of the Earth Boar, a grounding influence that also inspires you to spend more time outdoors. What outdoor adventures would you like to experience in the coming month(s)?

4. As the earth thaws and softens, it is a time for releasing regret and other negative emotions, and moving forward with renewed force. What mindset do you want to begin the month with?

## MARCH'S SEASONAL HABIT

### *earthing*



Earthing, or grounding as it is often known, is a simple way to connect with the natural world wherever you are. When was the last time you walked barefoot outdoors? We are losing our natural electric connection with the earth because we almost always wear shoes, but it's easy to readdress the balance.

Go outside and place your bare feet on the earth or grass. Take three deep breaths in and out. Stretch a little if you like, or scrunch your toes to feel what's beneath. Walk for a while, taking care to notice your surroundings. Try to make this part of your daily routine.

Benefits that others have observed with regular earthing include a reduction in stress, improved circulation and an improved immune function.

## *The Creative Countryside Community* 2019 Sustainability Challenge

*Every month this year, I'll be setting you a challenge to be kinder to the planet. Having others working alongside you, and focusing on just one thing each month, will hopefully encourage you to make these changes permanent. If you've already achieved this month's challenge, there will be an 'extra' challenge at the bottom for you to try if you like!*

### **MARCH: REDUCE FOOD WASTE**

"It takes water, energy, fuel and packaging to produce the food we all love and buy. Does it really belong in the bin?"

Half of the food we throw away can be eaten, keeping it out of the bin is good for our pockets and the planet combined." (Source: [Love Food Hate Waste](#))

Reducing food waste is all about planning, preparation, and thinking outside the box.

This month your challenge is to reduce the amount of food you throw away. Start by planning ahead with your menus so that you can transfer to your shopping list. Then, if there's still leftovers, have them for lunch, or get inspired by recipes on [this site](#).

If you need an extra helping hand, *The Frugal Cottage* has a [30 day e-course](#) for less than £10 on reducing your food spend (and waste).

### **EXTRA CHALLENGE**

*Choose to buy food through [Too Good to Go](#) - an app that allows you to choose perfectly edible food from restaurants and supermarkets that would otherwise be thrown away. You won't know quite what you'll get until you pick it up!*



CELTIC TREE MONTH

Ash

*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.*

## ASH

Wisdom. Prosperity. Compassion.

The ash tree is also often called the 'World Tree', rooting deep into the earth and believed to be at the centre of everything. As such, the ash feels the pain and joy of all living things, and can serve as a reminder to think beyond our own spheres with compassion.

It also suggests we should consult our own roots and to certain of our inner direction before making any decisions.

It is said that burning ash wood will bring you great prosperity.

## *Seasonal Celebrations*

# SPRING EQUINOX

(20TH)

A time of renewal and rebirth, the spring equinox has been celebrated for thousands of years across many cultures.

Derived from Latin, the word *equinox* refers to “equal night”, and the twice-yearly moment that the sun falls directly on the equator, meaning day and night are equal in length. This is true at all points on the earth’s surface, apart from at each pole, where it is about to change from permanent light to dark, or permanent dark to light.

The spring - or vernal - equinox marks the first day of spring, poised and balanced in equal darkness and light. From this point on the North Pole will tilt towards the sun once more, and into the lighter half of the year, until the autumn equinox arrives.

It is the perfect day to go outside and connect with nature, observing the new life taking form around you. Look for buds in the trees, and colour emerging everywhere.

A time of rebirth, we can also use this day to make changes in our lives that perhaps we have been putting off over the darker months. Eggs are also in abundance, and not just the chocolate variety. Druids would plant them in fields to invite abundance to the land.

Cleanse and wake up your body after the hardships of winter with a draught of Dandelion and Burdock (a traditional remedy), and start your day by watching the sunrise on this first day of spring.

## *Seasonal Celebrations*

# HOLI

(21ST)

One of the most celebrated and revered of Indian festivals, Holi Festival, also known as the ‘festival of love’ or the ‘festival of colours,’ is celebrated all over the country. At this festivity people unite together and forget any resentment or bad feelings, and bring forth positivity instead through the brightness of the colours.

The Hindu festival starts by lighting the bonfire the day before Holi, to symbolise good triumphing over bad. On the day itself those celebrating play with colour and spend the evening showing love and respect for those close to them.

The main celebration is to welcome spring, but it goes deeper than that. It is believed that this is the one day of the year that God looks the other way, so those who wish to can rid themselves of sin before starting anew.

This is symbolised by the paint and powdered dye that is thrown onto each other during the day, leaving revellers coated in colour, and then washed off in the evening for them to be reborn clean.

If you’re unable to bedeck yourself in colour this Holi, why not experiment with the four main colours used in art, clothing or food? Red is symbolic of love and fertility; blue represents Krishna, god of love and compassion; yellow symbolises turmeric, which represents prosperity in Hindu culture; and finally, green brings forth spring and new beginnings.



## GATHER & FEAST

*Join together to mark the beginning of spring, to celebrate growth and new life emerging from the earth.*

### SEARCH FOR SPRING

This month, create a small display in the centre of your table, or on your mantelpiece. Collect seeds, feathers, spring flowers, foliage, eggshells - gather anything that is suggestive of spring to place together and celebrate this transformation of the natural world.

Day-to-day, a pledge to have fresh flowers at all times is always cheering.

### MENU PLAN

*To Begin:* [Spanakopita with chard and leeks](#)

*For Main:* [Wild garlic, nettle and asparagus frittata](#)

*To Finish:* [Lemon & honey oatmeal biscuits](#)

*Drinks:* [Garden toddy](#)

## *Eat Seasonably in March*

March heralds the start of spring, and that means fresh new shoots and green vegetables emerging from the soil. But we are also still in the depths of the 'hungry gap', where the veg plot has little to offer that can appear on our plates. It is instead a time for waiting, nurturing and patience. With that in mind, a lot of what is seasonal at this time of year is either forced (rhubarb) or stored from the winter months.

If you can hunt out some early spring greens, try them sautéed with bacon and mustard seeds. Wild garlic should also start to surface soon - difficult to buy in the shops but available from organic veg schemes such as Riverford, it has a subtle flavour and is perfect in homemade pesto and pasta sauces. In fact, anything green and leafy is good at this time of the year; as the winter months come to a close and the stodgy puddings and hearty casseroles are left behind for another year, it is only natural to start craving nutritious, healthy foods.

Salads are sneaking back into our kitchens in many forms - add olive oil, mozzarella and a few nuts or sultanas to mizuna or rocket leaves and you've got yourself a nutritious side dish. I've been adding leftover grains from chillis and risottos to make a more substantial lunch.

### MARCH CHECKLIST

Spring greens	Wild nettles
Rhubarb	Lemons
Mizuna	Oranges
Rocket	Leeks
Spinach	Chicory
Spring onions	Radishes
Purple sprouting broccoli	Watercress





## *Rituals and Rites*

### EQUINOX OBSERVANCE

Equal dark, equal light  
Flow in Circle, deep insight  
Blessed Be, Blessed Be  
The transformation of energy!  
So it flows, out it goes  
Three-fold back it shall be  
Blessed Be, Blessed Be  
The transformation of energy!

*Night An'Fey*

### SPRING MEDITATION

You ask me why I dwell in the green mountain;  
I smile and make no reply for my heart is free of care.  
As the peach-blossom flows down stream and is gone into the unknown,  
I have a world apart that is not among men.

*Li Bai*

# March 2019

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				<i>1st</i> St David's Day	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
<i>4th</i>	<i>5th</i>	<i>6th</i> New Moon	<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>	<i>16th</i>	<i>17th</i> St Patrick's Day
<i>18th</i>		<i>20th</i> Spring Equinox	<i>21st</i> Full Worm Moon  Holi Festival	<i>22nd</i>	<i>23rd</i> Community Meet-Up (Yorkshire Sculpture Park)	<i>24th</i>
<i>25th</i>	<i>26th</i>	<i>27th</i>	<i>28th</i>	<i>29th</i>	<i>30th</i>	<i>31st</i>

## YOUR SEASONAL COULD-DO LIST

Take ten minutes on a sunny day to sit outside. Close your eyes and do nothing except soak up those spring sunshine rays.

Split that bunch of flowers you bought or picked into smaller arrangements and scatter them around the house for spring blooms in every room.

Wake up at first light for the spring equinox and watch the sun rise into a new season.

Keep your eyes peeled for early bluebells as the month progresses - they will soon be carpeting the woodlands.

Forage for dandelions – add young leaves to salads or sandwiches, throw the roots into stir-fries or grind down to make coffee, and add the flowers to your homemade wine recipes.

Start practising your hot cross bun eating skills!

Gather up some wild garlic and [make pesto](#).

## MENU PLANNING / OTHER NOTES

- 1st.....
- 2nd.....
- 3rd.....
- 4th.....
- 5th.....
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- 30th.....
- 31st.....

## 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.

[www.creativecountryside.com](http://www.creativecountryside.com)