

CREATIVE COUNTRYSIDE

Stories. Nature. Folklore. Adventure.

september





sep-tem-ber

late Old English, from Latin *September* (also source of Old French *Septembre*, Spanish *Setiembre*, Italian *Settembre*, German *September*), from *septem* “seven”. So called because it was the seventh month of the old Roman calendar, which began the year in March; Julian calendar reform (46 B.C.E.) shifted the new year back two months. Replaced Old English *hærfestmonað*, *haligmonað*. Related: *Septembral*.

SEPTEMBER SONNET

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

O golden month! How high thy gold is heaped!
The yellow birch-leaves shine like bright coins strung
On wands; the chestnut's yellow pennons tongue
To every wind its harvest challenge. Steeped
In yellow, still lie fields where wheat was reaped;
And yellow still the corn sheaves, stacked among
The yellow gourds, which from the earth have wrung
Her utmost gold. To highest boughs have leaped
The purple grape,--last thing to ripen, late
By very reason of its precious cost.
O Heart, remember, vintages are lost
If grapes do not for freezing night-dews wait.
Think, while thou sunnest thyself in Joy's estate,
Mayhap thou canst not ripen without frost!



Early Autumn

The footpath leads uphill away from the village, cutting through the four-and-a-half acres of our land, before hugging the hedgerows the rest of the way, and ending up behind our old house. In summer, you can see as far as the wooded pheasantry to the left, and the radar golf ball to the right, a spherical and unusual addition to the arable landscape. Today, however, fog shrouds the fields, and the air is so thick and cloying that I can only make out the base of the tree trunks, squat and steady.

Walks this early are usually silent, as we let our senses adjust, disappearing into this quiet, shadowy world, becoming part of a fairy-tale with Little Red Cap, Hansel and Gretel, and the Snow Child.

I pocket changes in the season: the slow blush of berries on the hedgerow; hoary cobwebs dripping with dew. A magpie perches on a branch not too far away. From a distance, its tail looks like a dark, unopened fan, feathers clustered like folds waiting to be unfurled. I whisper under my breath the old-age lore - *one for sorrow* - before looking desperately around for a second - *two for joy* - but I see nothing.



September 2018 Moon Phases

THIRD QUARTER: 2ND SEPTEMBER

Think back on last month's intentions.

NEW MOON: 9TH SEPTEMBER

Set your intentions for the month ahead.

FIRST QUARTER: 16TH SEPTEMBER

Check in with your intentions and take action.

FULL MOON: 24TH SEPTEMBER

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

HARVEST MOON

This month's full moon is also known as the Harvest Moon, as it occurs closest to the autumn equinox, providing the most light needed to complete the harvest.

Best days for harvesting above ground crops: 18th and 19th

Best days for harvesting below ground crops: 8th, 27th and 28th



WHEEL OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION

Mabon

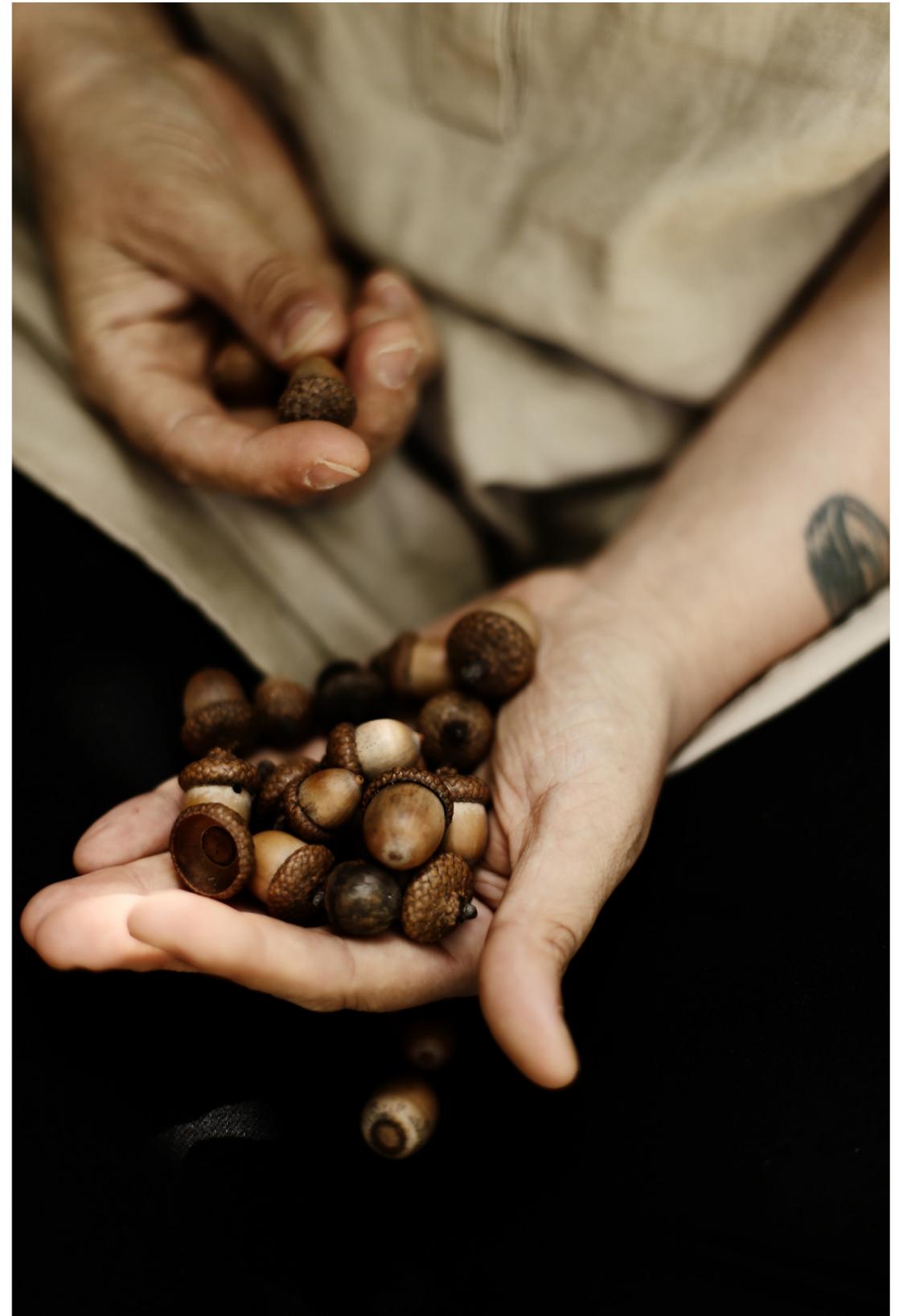
What is Mabon?

Mabon, or the Autumn Equinox as it is also known, takes place 21st/22nd September. A point of perfect balance on the Wheel of the Year, at this moment night and day are of equal length; unsurprisingly, balance is a key theme of the celebration – dark and light, masculine and feminine, inside and outside. After this point the year wanes once again, with darkness slowly defeating the light as autumn progresses and we fall into the winter months.

But the onset of dark half of the year is no cause for sadness. All living things find their roots in the darkness, and one way to approach this time is to see it as a return and chance to reconnect with our own roots. After the toil of harvest time, traditionally late September was an opportunity to rest and reap what you have sown; although most of us are not part of a farming community, this concept can be applied to our lives, looking back to when we sowed the seeds of intent in spring, and reflecting on their impact.

Mabon is therefore a time to complete half-finished projects from earlier in the year, or to clear and let go of what is no longer serving you as intended. It is also a moment to consider the reflective season ahead – winter – and begin to formulate new ideas to be nourished and explored during these quieter months before their implementation in the spring.

Named after the God of Welsh mythology, Mabon is the Child of Light and the son of the Earth Mother Goddess, Modron. He reminds that although the sun's power is diminishing, and the days are shortening, the light will remain and return. In celebration of the Earth and the abundance it has provided during the harvest season, gifts are given, as well as thanks for friendships, family, creations, achievements, and our own personal harvest.



An Individual Response to the Equinox

1.
Think back to spring. What intentions did you have for the year ahead? What did you set out to do?
2.
Give thanks for everything you have achieved so far. Consider: why were you able to succeed, when other intentions may have failed? Decide if these losses still require focus, and approach them with renewed vigour. Anything else? It's time to let it go with thanks and a blessing; release the past.
3.
Explore what you can take forward to the next cycle. What has been abundant in your life over the past few months? How can this continue as you move forward? Share your thoughts with others who may be struggling with similar things.
4.
Allow new ideas to formulate; plant the seeds of what you wish to achieve in the future, but do not dwell on them too much. Write them in a journal, and let them simmer during the winter months. You'll find yourself building on them, adapting them, and sometimes realising that they need changing altogether. Come spring, you'll be ready to move forward with certainty.

MABON WITH FAMILY

Make being outdoors a priority, whatever the weather. Plan a walk in some woods with a flask of something hot and the last of a bramble and apple pie. While you're walking, why not take part in the Woodland Trust's leaf challenge? You can download the resource [here](#), and there are tons of other seasonal resources for children on their website too.

Plant some bulbs, seeds, or over-wintering vegetables. Think broad beans, peas, onions, calendula, cornflowers, annual poppies and lavender. Why not take charge of a different plant each? You could also plant some of the nuts, seeds and berries you gather on the day. Label them and see what comes up in the spring.

Bake an apple cake or pudding together. [This recipe](#) is so simple, and you can add sultanas and mixed spice to the cooling apple mixture for something a bit different.





A MABON CELEBRATION

Draw together family and friends for an afternoon or evening of seasonal celebration. If you can be outside, even better!

DECORATIONS

Symbolic of the fruit harvest, the apple represents healing, renewal, regeneration and wholeness. It is appropriate, then that it is also symbolic of this pagan festival. Put the apple at the root of your celebration by first using it for decoration.

Cut an apple width ways to reveal a pentagram containing seeds. The five points suggests the elements of Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit, and the circle surrounding represents the cycle of life and nature. This pentacle is believed to protect against evil and is often used to guard entrances to the home.

Alternatively, use your cut apples to dress a Mabon altar - think of it as a nature table, and you can't go far wrong. Add other foraged fruit or berries and give thanks for the harvest they provide.

For other decorations, think of rich autumnal colours: green, red, orange, yellow, brown and gold. Add the last of the wildflowers, or collect leaves and fallen debris to adorn the table(s).

Natural fabrics like linen and hessian provide rustic charm as tablecloths or runners.

Mabon Menu

A TASTER

Apple Crisps

TO BEGIN

Butternut Squash & Chilli Soup
served with Soda Bread

FOR MAIN

Chanterelle, Kale & Purple Sage Tagliatelle

TO FINISH

Apple and Blackberry Crumble
with Rosemary, Cinnamon & Rosehip

DRINKS

Spice Seedlip & Ginger Ale



Where to find the recipes...

A Taster- [The Seasonal Table](#)

To Begin - [BBC Good Food](#) and [Paul Hollywood](#)

For Main- [The Seasonal Table](#)

To Finish - [The Seasonal Table](#)

Drinks - [Seedlip](#)

The September Edit

KEY DATES

2nd	Celtic Tree Month of Vine begins
9th-11th	Feast of Mother Earth (Greek)
21st	Mabon (Autumn Equinox)
29th	Michaelmas

WHAT'S IN SEASON?

blackberries, runner beans, courgettes, sweetcorn, butternut squash, apples, kale, leeks, cauliflower, red cabbage

THE CELTIC TREE MONTH OF VINE

The tree month of vine is a time for harvest. A symbol of both happiness and anger, the vine is suggestive of passion. It is a time of celebration, of the garden, of joy and excitement, but also the darker aspects of mother earth. It is a good time to work on your own ambitions and goals, and to aim for more balance in your life.

Rituals and Rites

HARVEST SONG

Harvest home, harvest home!
We've plowed, we've sowed
We've reaped, we've mowed
And brought safe home
Every load.

AUTUMN EQUINOX RITUAL

Smoke hangs like haze over harvested fields,
The gold of stubble, the brown of turned earth
And you walk under the red light of fall
The scent of fallen apples, the dust of threshed grain
The sharp, gentle chill of fall.
Here as we move into the shadows of autumn
The night that brings the morning of spring
Come to us, Lord of Harvest
Teach us to be thankful for the gifts you bring us.

A HARVEST MOON TOAST

Drink a toast to Dionysus, the God of wine and ecstasy - The son of the Moon! Gather with friends to celebrate the vine with a bottle of good wine and good cheer. Catch the Moon's reflection in your cup and raise it up in salutation. Now drink in Her essence and feel the presence of the God and Goddess.

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