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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Celtic Wheel of the Year

By Jeri Ballast

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The Celtic calendar was lunar based, with thirteen months. Extra days as needed were added at new year's as a "time between times." The ancient Celts divided the year into a wheel of eight segments, each with a corresponding festival.

The four fire festivals, so-called because all include bonfires as part of the celebration, take place on the last evening of a month and the following day. The Celts, like the Jews, count a day from sunset to sunset. That's why we celebrate All Hallow's Eve, Midsummer's Eve, and so on.

These four fire festivals are tied to the agricultural cycle as follows:

Samhain is celebrated on October 31–November 1 (our Halloween). It is the end of the harvest, the beginning of winter and once marked the Celtic new year. At Samhain, the barrier between our world and the Otherworld thins, allowing contacts between the spirits (faeries) and humans. Normal rules of human conduct do not apply and one may "run wild". This was also a festival of the dead and the church was easily able to transform these holidays into All Saint's Day (November 1) and All Soul's Day (November 2).

Imbolc is celebrated February 1–2 (later transformed into Candlemas by the church, and popular now as Groundhog Day). Imbolc marked the beginning of Spring, the beginning of new life (in Britain the beginning of lambing season). Dedicated to the ancient mother goddess in her maiden aspect, it was later transformed into a feast day for the Irish saint of the same name (and attributes), St. Brigid.

The third festival of the agricultural year is Beltane (Bealtunn in Scots Gaelic, meaning May Day), celebrated April 30–May 1. The god, Bel (or Cernunnos, the horned god of Ireland) dies but is reborn as the goddess' son. He then impregnates her ensuring the neverending cycle of rebirth. This is very basic fertility worship. May Day traditions includes young people picking flowers in the woods (and spending the night there), and the dance around the May Pole, weaving red (for the god) and white (for the goddess) streamers round and round. A great bonfire celebrates the return of the sun.

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The final celebration of the agricultural year is Lughnasadh (Lammas in England), the feast of the god Lugh and the first fruits of the harvest (generally wheat or corn). Lughnasadh is celebrated August 31–September 1. At Lammas, the Corn King dies (to be reborn at spring), ensuring plenty for the winter.

The other four holidays of the Celtic year celebrate the spring and fall equinoxes and the winter and summer solstices. Each name contains the word "Alban" meaning "Light of".

Alban Arthuan (Light of Arthur), like winter solstice celebrations all over the world, celebrates the return of the sun following the shortest day in the year. It's no wonder the church adopted these holidays as the birthdate of the Son. From ancient Celtic and Norse mythology we enjoy such holiday traditions as holly and mistletoe, the yule log, Santa Claus in his aspects of Father Christmas or the Holly King.

Supposedly, King Arthur was born on the winter solstice (and he, too, will come again).

The spring (vernal) equinox is celebrated as Alban Eiler (Light of the Earth). The equinoxes were considered a time of balance, not only between dark and light, but between worlds as well and, therefore, a time of high magical potential. More mundanely, this festival signified the time for spring planting and fertility rituals.

Alban Heruin (Light of the Shore) is celebrated as Midsummer's Day with games, picnics, and all manner of light-hearted fun. The antics of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare well capture the spirit of this festival, including the interaction between our people and those of the faery world.

Finally, Alban Elued (Light of the Water) is observed at the autumn equinox and, like the spring equinox, is a very sacred time when the line between worlds is thin and magical possibilities abound.

Much more seems to be known about the four fire festivals (which are still celebrated in many traditional ways) than the four solar festivals. Were the solar festivals mainly druidic sacred times in which lay participation was minimal (it would seem that some of the neo-druids have taken this view and make rather more of these dates than the Irish and Gaels do)? Or could the solar celebrations pre-date druidism, belonging to the Stonehenge builders, and have fallen slowly into disuse? This seems a possibility since the Celtic calendar is lunar based, rather than solar.

Jeri Ballast is owner and sole operator of

, a website for lovers of Celtic and Medieval

history and fantasy.

Celtic Wedding Rings

By Kirsten Hawkins

Celtic Wheel of the Year

A fairly new trend in wedding ring design has risen in popularity over the past few years and it's based on something that is anything but new. Celtic wedding rings, wedding bands and engagement rings that are designed featuring classic Celtic knot work are adorning more and more matrimonial fingers than ever before, perhaps since the days of the Celts themselves. At one time these rings could only be special ordered from specific companies and were very costly. Today, however, with the rise in popularity of ancient Celtic design, many jewelers are carrying Celtic wedding rings and jewelry of all kinds on a regular basis.

The best and most beautiful Celtic wedding rings still come from companies that design the jewelry and do all the work themselves. Special intricate designs can be custom ordered and there are companies that will work your initials into a unique Celtic design for your wedding band... Purchasing your wedding rings from one of these companies can result in your having a true one of a kind ring that is completely unique to you. If you love the Celtic look but want to spend a bit less, however, you can simply go to your closest jeweler and find a Celtic wedding ring that suits your tastes. The method you use is entirely up to you.

Celtic wedding rings take their laced designs from the patterns of the ancient Celts, European peoples in the areas of England and Ireland in the last few hundred years B.C. At one time the Celtic civilization stretched across most of Europe, but it is from Ireland that most of the Celtic traditions and designs have been gleaned. Celtic wedding rings incorporate the most recognizable of Celtic designs, the interwoven lacework of basic shapes, entwined and overlapping in a distinct pattern.

Celtic jewelry, including Celtic wedding rings, first gained popularity with followers of neo-pagan religions like Wicca, but are now worn by people of many faiths who simply like the look of the designs. Influences of Celtic design can be seen in many cultures, traditions, and religions of today, most notably in Roman Catholicism which has long since adopted the image of the Celtic Cross as one of their own. It seems only natural that the intricate, ornate, and beautiful designs of the Celts would once again find their way into popular culture. Celtic jewelry began appearing in mainstream America again about ten years ago, although it has been around in one form or another for ages before that.

Celtic wedding rings and other Celtic jewelry make a statement about the person who wears them to the rest of the world. Wearing it says that this is a unique and different person with their own style and a different perspective. Having a Celtic wedding ring on your finger will let you hear some things as well. Most common is the comment, "Oh my gosh, what a gorgeous ring! Where did you get that?"

Kirsten Hawkins is an event planner from Nashville, TN. Visit

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