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How To Do The Beltane Ritual

Beltane is a yearly event that is celebrated by Wiccans to symbolize union and balance in the world. It is usually held in May and is a celebration of fertility and new life for the coming year. The word itself means "shining fire". This is one of the festivals that are held during day time.

For thousands of years, people have celebrated this ritual all over northern Europe and probably in lands where pagans gathered. Spring flowers are collected, and people walk through the village streets decorating houses with flowers. Most of the people in the homes would leave food outside for the "trick or treat" version of Beltane.

This celebration is all about sowing seeds and creating new life. One of the most important traditions on this holiday is that of the Maypole. Young men would choose a fir tree and fashion a pole for this occasion. This pole would be placed in the center of the village and closely guarded until the day of the celebration.

1. Choose an area for the gathering and cleanse it with a besom
2. Cast the circle in order to create a "safe space" where unwanted, unwelcome spirits cannot enter.
3. Invoke the East, South, West and North with proper ritual chanting so that they help us with their powers and energies.
4. Invite the Goddess to join us, witness our ritual and bless us. The Goddess represents the feminine aspect of fertility, the vagina (Earth)
5. Invite the God (or Gods) to bless and consecrate the pole which is the male aspect of fertility, representing the phallus which produces the seed.





6. A hole is prepared and consecrate with some oil and wine. Chant: Earth Mother, may this offering prepare you to receive this symbol of your consort, our Lord"
7. The men walk, chanting, holding the Maypole, going two steps forward and one backward, making grunting noise. The ladies present come forward and rub oil on the pole while making a wish for themselves and their future. They may also tie ribbons on the pole. The color of the ribbons also may signify their dreams for the future.
8. With a lot of flourish, chanting and effort, the heavy pole is thrust into the earth to encourage new life and the blossoming of our dreams.
9. Now that the seed has been spilled, people start dancing and the Beltane fire is lit. People dance around the fire or jump over the fire to purify them.
10. After the ritual, the deities are thanked and dismissed. Now the guardians or watchtowers are thanked for their guidance and sent off to their realms.
11. The circle is opened and people return home dreaming of abundance and prosperity for the coming year.

One of the main activities of the festival is the lighting of the bonfire. Sometimes after the community Beltane bonfire is lit, individuals re-light their own home hearth fires from the Beltane Bonfire. These bonfires are used to purify the cattle by driving them through (or between two) bonfires. Juniper boughs are thrown into the bonfire to add to the smoke and purification of people and cattle.

Wiccans celebrate a variation of Beltane as one of the Sabbats, the eight solar holidays. It is usually celebrated in the northern hemisphere on May 1 and in the southern hemisphere on November 1.

Food items such as custards and toasted oatmeal cakes are traditionally served at the celebration. About 15,000 people are believed to have celebrated Beltane on Colton Hill in Edinburgh, Scotland recently.

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